

Another Armenian Church in Turkey Vandalized with Hate Graffiti

ISTANBUL (Combined Sources) – Another Armenian church in Istanbul, Turkey, has been vandalized with anti-Armenian graffiti, the Armenian Patriarchate of Constantinople announced on Facebook.

Vandals spray painted hate messages in English and Arabic on the exterior wall of the Surp Hreshdagabed Armenian Church in the neighborhood of Balat on Saturday, February 23.

The local council members reported the matter to Archbishop Aram Ateshian as well as the local police.

This is not the first incident in which Armenian institutions have been the target of graffiti and vandalism in Istanbul in recent years.

Only last week, the walls of the Armenian Surb Astvadsadsin Church in Istanbul's Zeinlik district were covered with hate graffiti. (See related editorial, page 18.)

In April 2018 photos of graffiti reading "This homeland is ours" spray-painted on the exterior wall of the Armenian Surp Takavor Church and a pile of trash was dumped in front of the church's door began.



"You are finish" on one of the doors

In 2016, the exterior walls of the Bomonti Mkhitarian Armenian School of Istanbul were vandalized with anti-

Armenian graffiti reading "One night, we suddenly will be in Karabakh."

The messages included the Turkish for "You are finish" (sic).

The Armenian patriarchate conveyed video footage of the incident to the police.

A recent report by a Protestant association had suggested that Christians living in Turkey were worried about the increasing hate speech against their communities.

Many Christian families reportedly had to leave the country due to intensified campaigns on traditional and social media portraying Christians as spies.

Minority Foundations Representative Moris Levi condemned the attack, according to the Turkish news site Sendika.org.

"These acts are a clear hate crime and our communities are still being subjected to such attacks," Levi said.

Armenian opposition lawmaker Garo Paylan posted pictures of the graffiti on Twitter and said authorities should shed light on the people behind the attack.

"A hate crime has been committed against Balat Surp Hreshdagabed Armenian Church. Hate crimes against churches

and see VANDALISM, page 4

Symposium and Concert Celebrating Tigran Mansurian at 80

LOS ANGELES – The celebration of the 80th birthday of composer Tigran Mansourian is an occasion both for reflection on the musical path he has traversed as well as to revisit select works from his hauntingly diverse repertoire in performance at a day-long event at UCLA's Schoenberg Hall on March 6.

Born in Beirut, Lebanon, Mansurian resettled in Armenia with his family after World War II, where he began to study music, soon distinguishing himself as a representative of the avant-garde constellation of Soviet composers that included Arvo Pärt, Alfred Schnittke and Valentin Silvestrov. That generation boldly experimented with styles emanating from Western Europe, before branching out to

see MANSURIAN, page 20



Tigran Mansourian

Roupen Herian Rescuer of Orphans Remembered By the TCA Metro LA Chapter



Aram Arkun

ALTADENA, Calif. – The Tekeyan Cultural Association Metro Los Angeles Chapter hosted a bilingual program titled "Roupen Herian: Rescuer of Armenian Orphans," on February 17 at the Tekeyan Center in Altadena. Boston-based scholar Aram Arkun, executive director of the Tekeyan Cultural Association of the United States and Canada and assistant editor of the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator*, served as the keynote speaker and presented the fascinating life of Herian, who dedicated himself to the herculean task of locating kidnapped Armenian women and children during and immediately after the Armenian Genocide.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Genocide Survivor Dies In Argentina at Age 106

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina (Prensa Armenia) – Lusine Beredjiklian, one of the last survivors of the Armenian Genocide, died on February 21, at age 106.

She was born on January 7, 1913 in Aintab.

"When I remember, I cannot sleep," Beredjiklian said in 2015, when the 100th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide was commemorated.

Beredjiklian said her father, Abraham, was a jeweler. He sent his elder sons to Aleppo when World War I had just started and later the entire family decided to go to Syria. On the way to Aleppo they were looted. Her mother, pregnant at that time, died on the way, while Abraham died in Damascus. After that her brothers moved to Argentina, but Lusine remained in Syria with her sister until 1929, after which they also moved to South America.

All her life Beredjiklian lived in Buenos Aires and was one of the active members of the local Armenian community.

Swiss High Court Tosses out Opposition To Geneva Genocide Monument

GENEVA (Swissinfo.ch) – Switzerland's highest court has rejected the opposition raised by several Genevans to a recently-unveiled monument commemorating the Armenian Genocide in the city.

The decision published by the Federal Court on Monday, February 18, rejected claims by residents that the monument would lead to the area becoming a site of demonstrations, or even conflict between members of the Armenian and Turkish communities.

"Residents can appeal when they are definitely or at least with sufficient probability, affected by the repercussions of such a decision," the court wrote. This was not the case for the monument in Parc Tremblay, Geneva.

The decision should bring to an end the long saga of the monument, which was unveiled in April 2018 after a decade of debates and delay.

Not only was it tricky to find an appropriate location for the genocide memorial – initially approved in 2008 – but opposition from Turkey also made the monument a diplomatic headache into which the federal government was forced to wade.

"Les Réverbères de la Mémoire" [Streetlights of memory], designed by French artist Melik Ohanian, is a collection of nine street lamps, each ten meters tall and featuring lamps in the form of teardrops, commemorating the Armenian Genocide.

The genocide was recognized by the parliament of Geneva in 2001 and by the Swiss federal parliament in 2003.

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ARMENIA

News From Armenia

Hrazdan Mayor Arrested On Corruption Charges

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — Former Mayor of Hrazdan Aram Danielyan was arrested on Tuesday, February 26, on suspicion of embezzlement and misuse of state funds, the Investigative Committee said.

Danielyan is suspected of embezzling land and property taxes during his years in office as mayor of the Armenian town.

The Investigative Committee said the criminal investigation is still ongoing.

Danielyan hasn't yet made any public statement on the matter.

Proceeds from Papian Concert to Go to April War Hero Fund

YEREVAN (Panorama.am) — Armenian opera singer, world-famous soprano Hasmik Papian sang at the 10th jubilee festival of the Armenian Music which is dedicated to the 90th anniversary of Armenian composer Avet Terteryan. The concert took place at Aram Khachaturyan concert hall on February 20.

As Papian had informed earlier, all proceeds of the charity concert will be donated to Armenak Urfanyan Fund, who died in the Four-Day Artsakh War in April 2016, destroying a tank and more than 10 enemy soldiers.

"I want to inform that 3,346,200 drams (\$6,800) were collected from the sale of the tickets thanks to your dedicated efforts. The proceeds will be transferred to Armenak Urfanyan Fund. I am extremely grateful to all those who contributed to this initiative," Papian wrote on her Facebook page.

"I had incredible feelings. My performance on February 20 was perhaps the most exciting and memorable concert in my career," she wrote.

The fund was launched by his mother in memory of all fallen heroes of the April war.

Tonoyan Gives Details of Russian-Armenian Fighter Jet Deal

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) — Armenia wants to buy a total of 12 multirole fighter jets from Russia and will likely receive four of them within a year, Defense Minister Davit Tonoyan said on Monday.

The Armenian Defense Ministry confirmed earlier this month the signing of a Russian-Armenian contract on the delivery of four Sukhoi Su-30SM jets to the South Caucasus country's Armed Forces. Tonoyan said last week that Yerevan will seek to acquire more such aircraft.

"We are continuing to negotiate on the delivery of the next batch of Su-30SMs," Tonoyan told the RIA Novosti news agency during a visit to the United Arab Emirates. "Everything will depend on how quickly these products will be manufactured. There are some issues with import substitution [by Russia] and so on."

"We are planning to get the first batch this year or the beginning of next year at the latest," he said, adding that the Armenian military's objective is to have a full squadron consisting of 12 of Russian-made warplanes.

Su-30SM is a modernized version of a heavy fighter jet developed by the Sukhoi company in the late 1980s.

The Russian newspaper Kommersant reported on February 1 that the Armenian government will use a Russian loan to buy the sophisticated jets at a discounted price. It did not specify their total price.

Russia lent Armenia \$200 million for arms acquisitions in 2015. The weapons delivered to the Armenian military under that deal include, among other things, multiple-launch rocket systems, anti-tank rockets, shoulder-fired surface-to-air missiles, and army radios.

Yerevan secured another Russian loan, worth \$100 million, for further arms acquisitions in 2017. It is still not clear what types of Russian military hardware will be purchased with that loan.

Tonoyan did not rule out the possibility of a third Russian government loan to Yerevan.

Yerevan University Head Under Mounting Pressure to Resign

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) — Education Minister Arayik Harutiunyan on Thursday, February 21, called for the resignation of the long-serving rector of Armenia's largest university who is facing corruption allegations denied by him as politically motivated.

Aram Simonyan, who has run Yerevan State University since 2006, came under pressure to resign following last spring's Velvet Revolution that toppled the country's previous government headed by Serzh Sargsyan. A member of Sargsyan's Republican Party (HHK)

ing membership in the former ruling party.

On Wednesday, February 20, Armenian police claimed that an unnamed "managing official of the university" has embezzled YSU funds and engaged in other corrupt practices over the past decade. In particular, a police statement said that in 2015 a private firm remodeled the official's apartment and separate house in return for being granted a 400 million-dram construction contract by the YSU administration.



Aram Simonyan, the Yerevan State University rector, holds a news conference in his office, 29 May 2018.

since 1997, Simonyan had long been accused by his detractors of suppressing student activism and placing YSU under a strong HHK influence.

The pressure on Simonyan grew in December after the State Oversight Service subordinate to Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan implicated the YSU administration in financial irregularities which it said had cost the state at least 800 million drams (\$1.65 million). The 63-year-old rector angrily denied the allegations, linking them to his continu-

The police did not formally charge anyone. Instead, they sent the case to another law-enforcement body for further investigation.

Speaking to journalists, Simonyan acknowledged that the police statement most probably referred to him. "I see political motives behind that," he said.

Accordingly, Simonyan rejected the "ridiculous" allegations, saying that they are part of the current government's efforts to force him out of YSU. He said he will not step down before

serving out his current term in office in 2020.

Meanwhile, Harutiunyan made a case for Simonyan's resignation after a weekly cabinet meeting in Yerevan. The education minister said that the YSU head should go because he is widely "associated with many negative practices that have existed in YSU and the sphere of higher education in general."

Harutiunyan, who taught at YSU before being appointed to Pashinyan's government in May, went on to accuse Simonyan of trying to "politicize" the corruption inquiries and "using many deans and scholars as a shield."

Pashinyan's Party in No Rush to Admit New Members

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) — Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan's Civil Contract party is careful not to admit a large number of new members even though thousands of Armenians are seeking to join it, a senior party member said on Tuesday, February 26.

Lena Nazaryan said Civil Contract has received 9,000 membership applications since Pashinyan swept to power in May on a wave of mass protests that brought down Armenia's former government. "We have still not accepted those applications," she said.

Nazaryan, who is also a deputy speaker of the Armenian parliament, suggested that many of the applicants have ulterior motives. "They think that it would give them some advantages in terms of getting government jobs or some other privileges," she said. "That is not possible. I don't think that we will admit all of those people who have submitted membership applications."

Nazaryan stressed that Civil Contract will thus not follow the example of former President Serzh Sargsyan's Republican Party of Armenia (HHK), which had accumulated vast financial and administrative resources during its long presence in government.

The HHK heavily relied on those resources to win just about every major Armenian election held before Sargsyan's dramatic resignation in April 2018. It had hundreds of thousands of nominal members, many of them public sector employees, government-linked entrepreneurs and people working for them. Few of them showed support for Sarkisian during the Pashinyan-led "velvet revolution."

The HHK failed to clear the 5 percent vote threshold to enter the parliament in snap general elections held in December.

"We don't want to go down that path," said Nazaryan, who actively participated in the revolution. "We don't want to admit people who are accustomed to being in a ruling party."

"We want to recruit only ideological people for the party," she added. "People who understand what the party stands for and want to join the state system because they have skills, knowledge and experience and are willing to be of use or just want to be in the party, finance it and oversee it."

Pashinyan set up Civil Contract in 2013 after splitting from former President Levon Ter-Petrosian's Armenian National Congress. It operated as a non-governmental organization mostly uniting young civic activists before becoming a full-fledged political party in 2015.

Putin, Pashinyan Discuss 'Regional Problems'

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) — Russian President Vladimir Putin discussed with Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan bilateral relations and regional security during a telephone conversation on Monday, February 25.

The Kremlin reported that the two leaders spoke about the "development of Russian-Armenian cooperation as well as regional problems." It did not elaborate.

Pashinyan's press office also gave no details in a virtually identical statement on the phone call. "The interlocutors discussed various issues on the agenda of Russian-Armenian allied relations," it said.

Putin and Pashinyan most recently met in Moscow on December 27. The talks focused, among other things, on a new price of Russian natural gas delivered to Armenia.

The two men held further discussions on the issue by phone in the following days. Russia's Gazprom giant announced a 10-percent rise in its gas price for Armenia on December 31.

Immediately after those talks, Putin sent New Year greetings to Robert Kocharyan, a former Armenian president arrested on coup charges on December 7. In August, he phoned Kocharyan to congratulate him on his 64th birthday. A spokeswoman for Putin said the two men "have been

maintaining warm relations that are not influenced by any events taking place in Armenia."

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov had earlier denounced the prosecutions of Kocharyan, as well as two retired Armenian generals facing the same charges. The authorities in Yerevan deny any political motives behind the high-profile criminal cases.

Pashinyan did not meet with Putin when he again visited Moscow in late January. He was received instead by Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev. The Armenian leader also gave a speech at the Moscow headquarters of the Russian-led Eurasian Economic Union (EEU).

In its five-year policy program approved by the parliament on February 14, Pashinyan's government's reaffirmed its commitment to Armenia's continued membership in the EEU and "strategic alliance" with Russia. The program describes close military ties with Moscow as an "important component" of Armenia's national security doctrine.

On February 8, Armenia deployed 83 medics, demining experts and other noncombat military personnel to Syria. Russian Defense Minister Sergey Shoygu thanked Yerevan for the deployment when he met with his Armenia counterpart Davit Tonoyan in Moscow on the same day.



ARMENIA

Armenian Oligarch Stands to Benefit from New Cement Duty

By Ani Mejlumyan

YEREVAN (Eurasianet) — Armenia's government has said it plans to implement a new customs duty on cement in order to keep cheaper foreign imports — especially from Iran — from flooding the market. The measure would directly benefit Gagik Tsarukyan, the head of the second biggest party in parliament and owner of one of Armenia's two cement companies.

During a government session on February 21, Minister of Economic Development and Investment Tigran Khachatryan introduced the new, \$45-per-ton duty as a means of "equalizing the pricing of imported and locally produced cement." Khachatryan said that imports of

cement had tripled over the past year because "neighboring countries" had increased subsidies to their domestic cement manufacturers, allowing them to undercut their Armenian competition.

One of those competitors is Tsarukyan's Ararat Cement. In May, Tsarukyan visited a factory in the Ararat region to meet with employees. He complained that cheap cement from Iran was threatening the business and that it was struggling to keep all 1,200 of its workers employed. "Before we were able to export cement to Georgia and Iran and then it reversed. Iran is importing 500 tons of cheap cement every day," he said.

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, who came into office on promises to tackle corruption but subsequently reached a sort of accommodation with Tsarukyan, the country's biggest oligarch, questioned the policy. "Are we sure that our manufacturers of cement are doing everything in their power to advance their technology or to bring prices down?" he asked Khachatryan at the government session.

Khachatryan replied that local manufacturers are acting in good faith: "I talked to one of the manufacturers — the biggest — in detail." The manufacturer said that the price had gone down about 13 percent as the result of adopting energy-saving technology. Khachatryan did not specify which manufacturer he was referring to; Tsarukyan's name was not mentioned at the meeting.

Pashinyan ultimately approved the duty, which will next be sent to the parliament for a



Gagik Tsarukyan

vote. While duties like this would normally enter into force six months after being announced, Khachatryan said that "taking into consideration the urgency of the situation it should enter into force in 10 days."

Tsarukyan's Prosperous Armenia party is the second largest in parliament after winning just over eight percent of the vote in December's elections.

"Tsarukyan got his way; the imports of cement will be limited," read one headline on the news website panarmenian.net. "Did the government make a decision on cement for Tsarukyan?" noted another headline, on

news.am.

One member of parliament from Prosperous Armenia defended the new tariff against accusations of favoritism. Sergey Bagratyan noted that Ararat will not be the only beneficiary of the duty, but the country's other cement maker, Hrazdan, will benefit as well. "When we have factories that employ thousands of people and we can't profit under the current prices, the government has to take action to defend local manufacturers," he told journalists on February 23.

(Ani Mejlumyan is a reporter based in Yerevan.)

Parliament Majority Rejects 'Threats' From Radical Group

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) — Representatives of the pro-government majority in the Armenian parliament denounced on February 26 what they called threats to the authorities made by a leader of a party whose members stormed a police station in Yerevan in 2016.

Zhirayr Sefilyan of the Sasna Tsrer party demanded on Monday, February 25, the immediate release of his two loyalists accused of murdering three police officers during the attack. Sefilyan threatened to "force" the authorities to free them.

His strongly-worded statement fueled media speculation about extreme actions against the Armenian government planned by Sasna Tsrer.

Sefilyan dismissed such speculation on Tuesday, accusing unnamed media outlets of "distorting" his statement. He insisted that his party is not planning an armed struggle against the country's current leadership.

This did not stop senior lawmakers representing Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan's My Step alliance from condemning Sefilyan.

"They had better finally stop talking in the language of threats," said Lena Nazaryan, a deputy parliament speaker. "That is unacceptable. That will not produce any results."

"[Sefilyan] said, 'If you don't free them, we will take some actions,'" Nikolay Baghdasaryan, another My Step deputy, said. "He then said, 'No, we won't take those actions.'"

"He must realize that he cannot adopt such a tone to publicly talk to the government because the government is now doing its best to get the country on its feet, develop its economy and live up to people's hopes," said Baghdasaryan. "With such actions, he wants to drive a wedge between various representatives of the society, which means playing into the hands of the [former ruling] HHK."

Vahagn Hovakimyan, another Pashinyan ally, argued that the government cannot interfere in the ongoing trial of 31 members of the armed group that seized the police station in July 2016. That would be illegal, he said.

All of those defendants, except Armen Bilyan and Smbat Barseghyan, were set free pending the outcome of the trials shortly after last spring's Velvet Revolution led by Pashinyan. The two stand accused of killing the three policemen during the gunmen's two-week standoff with security forces.

The armed group stormed the police facility in Yerevan's southern Erebuni district to demand that then President Serzh Sargsyan free Sefilyan and resign. Sefilyan was arrested a month before the deadly attack.

Pashinyan lambasted Sasna Tsrer in the run-up to the December 2018 parliamentary elections. He said its members and supporters will "feel the taste of asphalt" if they attempt to destabilize the political situation in Armenia.

The warning was prompted by Sasna Tsrer leaders' claims that the new Armenian parliament will have to be dissolved within two years because the country is now in a post-revolutionary "transitional period."

EU Envoy Sees 'Serious Progress' in Armenian Anti-Graft Fight

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) — Armenia's current government has made "serious progress" in combatting corruption in the country but should not "rest on its laurels," a senior European Union diplomat said on Tuesday,



Piotr Switalski

February 26.

Piotr Switalski, the head of the EU Delegation in Yerevan, admitted that the reform-minded government is serious about its repeated pledges to eliminate corrupt practices.

"But political will, being the sine qua non ele-

ment, is not enough," Switalski cautioned at a news conference. "You also need other elements such as institutions, laws and a social culture or environment."

"Regarding the institutions, we can see that the government wants to create a new, independent anti-corruption agency that will have wide-ranging powers," he said. He also praised the government's plans to enact anti-graft laws.

Switalski added that the EU stands ready to "help" the authorities in what he hopes will be a sustained and "long" campaign against corruption. "Don't rest on your laurels because the way [forward] is long," he said, appealing to them.

The number of high-profile corruption investigations launched by Armenian law-enforcement authorities has risen significantly since last spring's "velvet revolution." They have targeted former senior officials as well as former President Serzh Sargsyan's relatives.

Speaking in the parliament on February 12, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan declared that his administration has already "broken the spine of systemic corruption in Armenia."

Pashinyan said it will now focus on putting in place "institutional" safeguards against the problem. In particular, he said, it will make information about the personal assets of individuals holding or aspiring to state posts easily accessible to the public.

Switalski made clear that the EU is also encouraged by other reforms initiated by Pashinyan's government and will reward them with greater financial assistance already this year. He cited statements to that effect made by Johannes Hahn, the EU commissioner for European neighborhood and enlargement negotiations.

Hahn hailed democratic change in Armenia when he visited Yerevan and met with Pashinyan late last month. He singled out the conduct of the December 9 parliamentary elections, saying that they are regarded as free and fair by the international community.

Hahn did not specify the likely amount of the extra EU aid. He said only that it will be allocated from an EU fund designed to reward partner states' "special achievements" in the areas of democratization and rule of law.

Delegation Led by Parliament Speaker Visits Russia

MOSCOW (Armenpress) — A delegation from Armenia, led by Speaker of Parliament Ararat Mirzoyan, arrived in Russia on February 25 at the invitation of Speaker of the Federation Council of the Federal Assembly Valentina Matviyenko. On February 26 visited the Memorial of the Unknown Soldier and paid tribute to the memory of the Great Patriotic War victims.

The Armenian delegation members were accompanied by acting deputy Co-Chair of the Inter-Parliamentary Committee Igor Chernishenko, the Armenian Parliament told Armenpress.

Within the framework of the working visit the Speaker of the Armenian Parliament also visited the Holy Transfiguration Church of Russia and Nor Nakhichevan Diocese Seat of the Armenian Apostolic Church, took a tour in the Armenian educational center and had a meeting with the representatives of the Armenian community.

During the meeting Mirzoyan introduced the agenda of the Moscow visit, the position of the authorities on a number of issues. In the context of strengthening the friendship between the Armenian and Russian peoples, he underlined the special role of the Armenian commu-

nity in Russia.

The Armenian delegation members and the community representatives had an open and sincere discussion on a series of important public, educational and cultural issues concerning Armenia and Diaspora.



Speaker of Parliament Ararat Mirzoyan and other Armenian members of his delegation in Moscow.



INTERNATIONAL

International News

Prime Minister Receives IMF Armenia Rep

YEREVAN – Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan on Tuesday, February 26, received Richard Doornbosch, International Monetary Fund (IMF) executive director, who represents Armenia at the IMF.

Pashinyan noted that the government of Armenia attaches importance to continued cooperation with the IMF and is interested in further deepening of constructive partnership.

Doornbosch praised Armenia as a reliable partner for the International Monetary Fund.

The two discussed prospects for expanding and developing cooperation.

Pashinyan spoke about the promotion of the field of high technology in the structure of the economy, reform of the Tax Code, creation of micro businesses, regulation of business environment, reform of public administration and education systems, and activities under the anti-corruption policy. He added that with the change in the structure of the economy and promoting the use of high technologies in various sectors, the government aims to position Armenia as a technological hub. According to the prime minister, the government's task is to create opportunities in Armenia and to stimulate entrepreneurship so that everyone can realize their potential and contribute to the country's development.

Emphasizing the need for institutional and expert capacities for the success of reforms, the head of the government highlighted the relevant assistance of international business structures, including the IMF in that context.

Doornbosch noted that the IMF is ready to discuss the possibilities of assisting the implementation of reforms in the areas mentioned by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia.

World Bank to Assist Armenian Government In Reforming Health System

YEREVAN (Arka) – Armenia's Deputy Prime Minister Tigran Avinyan and World Bank Country Manager for Armenia Sylvie Bossoutrot met last week to look into a string of issues related to development and implementation of the health insurance system in Armenia. Health Minister Arsen Torosyan was also in attendance, the press service of the Armenian government reported on February 25.

Avinyan was quoted as saying that the government has sufficient opportunities and the will to implement such reforms, which will significantly raise the level of well-being of the country's citizens. One of these projects is the introduction of health insurance, he said.

Torosyan said in turn that he held discussions on this issue with international partners to identify the advantages and disadvantages of health insurance systems, run by various countries. He said the discussions will continue at the level of a working group being created.

According to Bossoutrot, the World Bank is ready to assist the government in implementing reforms healthcare in Armenia.

Earlier, Torosyan had said the country would switch to a comprehensive health insurance system by 2021. According to him, the key principles of the ongoing reform of the sector are to guarantee social justice in the health sector and combine the packages of health services provided to citizens. Aerospace 3-2

Iran, Armenia Trade Reach New Highs

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – Trade between Armenia-Iran trade turnover reached \$364 million in 2018, which is an unprecedented number since 1991, the government announced on February 25.

The Iranian IRNA agency reported that last year Iranian exports to Armenia amounted to \$296 million.

Armenian PM Nikol Pashinyan was scheduled to visit Iran on February 27.



Some graffiti has been covered up

Another Armenian Church Vandalized

VANDALISM, from page 1

Synagogues take place several times every year. Not only the perpetrators but the powers behind (the attacks) should be addressed. Above all, hate-generating policies should be ended," said Paylan.

Armenian writer Murad Mıhçı also commented on the attack on Twitter. Sharing the images of the church, Mıhçı said: "The walls and the door of the Balat Surp Armenian Church. ... Its entrance was built with the rocks from the historical church in znik (Nicaea), where the council met. The church opens one day a year. It is believed to heal people. Just as they say, "ARE YOU FINISH?", there are no local people left. It is a New Turkey."

(Reports from Panorama.am, Turkish Minute, and Ahval were used to compile this report.)

Stone Cross at Canterbury Cathedral To Commemorate Armenian Genocide

LONDON – A two-meter-all, half-ton stone cross, hewn out of volcanic stone from Armenia, has been given on long term loan to the Cathedral to commemorate the Armenian Genocide of 1914-1923.

The cross is the work of Brigadier John Meardon, who retired from his role as Receiver General at the Cathedral in

thought it was a project we could both work on using stone as the medium.

"Vartan drew up the design and I approached the Dean and Chapter to see if they would be happy to accept the cross as a loan item of religious sculpture. It seemed a good fit for Canterbury as Archbishop Randall Davidson was very public in fighting the

of Canterbury in 1903, succeeding Frederick Temple and remained in office until his resignation in 1928.

Meardon added: "It's a reddish stone made from compressed volcanic ash and it took about three weeks for the half-ton block to be transported from the quarry in Armenia to Dover.

"We started carving the stone in July 2018 and it was completed earlier this year. The design incorporates traditional Armenian liturgical symbology: there is a wheel of infinity, two peacocks and steps representing the ascent to heaven. There is an inscription in Armenian which reads 'And I go towards the source of the light'.

The freestanding cross, called a "Khachkar" in Armenian, will be placed in the Cathedral's Memorial Garden and will be dedicated in a short service following Evensong on Saturday 2 March.

The Armenia Orthodox church is perhaps the oldest in the world. King Tiridates of Armenia established Christianity

as the state religion almost 300 years before St Augustine arrived in Canterbury and the Armenian Orthodox Church remains one of three Christian presences still active in Jerusalem, along with the Greek Orthodox and the Catholic Churches.

(Originally published in the Canterbury Cathedral newsletter on February 4.)



The stone cross with Brigadier John Meardon, left, and Vartan Moskofian

2016, and Vartan Moskofian, an electronics engineer.

Meardon said, "The idea behind the stone was two-fold. It's to mark the centenary of the genocide of 1.5 million Armenians and to act as a symbol for reconciliation between peoples.

"Vartan and I are members of 'Pure Form,' an amateur stone sculpture group here in Canterbury. Vartan wanted to commemorate the genocide which had affected so many Armenians and

Armenian cause at the end of the First World War and not only is he buried in the Cloister but he also has a memorial inside the Cathedral. The Dean and Chapter have agreed to accept it after seeing the drawings and hearing the story. Vartan sounded out the Armenian community in UK and elsewhere and secured financial donations to purchase a block of stone in Armenia and ship it to Canterbury.

Davidson was appointed Archbishop



INTERNATIONAL



Vaughan Pilikian

“Armenian Must Be Called My Father Tongue”

By Artsvi Bakhchinyan

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

YEREVAN/LONDON — Vaughan (Vahan) Pilikian was born in London to an American mother and Armenian father. After studies in classical languages, fine art and filmmaking at the universities of Oxford, Cambridge and Harvard, he has produced work in several different fields. His career to date has seen him chasing burning barrels in a village in Devon, filming the lives of shipbreakers in northern India, translating the Sanskrit epic the Mahabharata and broadcasting recordings from ancient Babylon on Resonance FM. In 2012 his play “Leper Colony” ran for three weeks at the Yard Theatre in London to controversy and acclaim. In 2016, he was the first and, it turned out, the last British Council Resident Artist in Transcarpathia, Ukraine, where he made a performance about werewolves. Last year he published his third book of poems and he is presently completing work on a feature film about migrants in peril and adrift in the hinterlands of Europe.

Dear Vaughan, I want to start our conversation remembering your father, Hovhanness Pilikian, who died last December. In 1980s he was quite known in the art circles of Soviet Armenia, particularly due to his extraordinary interpretations of Shakespeare. He was a polymath, and I see that you took after him.

My father was a difficult man, as anyone who spent any time with him will attest. But he was a true individual. Nothing held him back. He was a force of nature, a person in whom the destructive and creative impulses were closely imbricated. I certainly inherited a great number of his interests and passions. One thing he did instill in me is a sense that conventions and boundaries are not really a concern. I don’t have a plan or a career: like him, I have only my obsessions and my interests. These things lead me: I do not decide them. The notion of a polymath only makes sense in a divided and damaged society in which the Geist, to use of necessity a German word for a concept we do not have in English, has become fissured and broken. Surely we must aspire to cut across the domains that are mostly very recent creations. If we cannot aspire to hold different kinds of knowledge and technique simultaneously within ourselves then as a society I feel we are doomed to servitude and ignorance.

You translate ancient Indian poetry from Sanskrit into English. One can think that all Sanskrit literature has been already translated into English. Do you make

first-time translations or new translations of works that have been previously done and now are outdated?

Unfortunately only a tiny fraction of Sanskrit literature has been translated into English. The only text with any real currency in the West is the *Bhagavad Gita*, but that is often taken out of context and is misinterpreted. This isn’t just a popular matter: Western scholarship is mostly and proudly ignorant of Indian civilization. Perhaps there is a kind of neurotic repression at work. Ancient India strongly influenced pre-Socratic Greek philosophy and its early metaphysics far surpass in subtlety parallel developments in the West. The vast and multifarious religious systems of Hinduism and of Buddhism can all be traced back to ancient Sanskrit sources. The *Mahabharata*, for instance, a text I have worked on extensively, is one of the most extraordinary and dazzling creations in world literature. *The Vedas* too are an entire cosmological imaginary, spellbinding in their beauty and power. Why are these not better known in the West? Sadly the ambitious translation project of which I was a part collapsed ignominiously some years ago. I am working independently at the moment on some translations from Prakrit, which is a vernacular language related to Sanskrit and which contains I think some of the most astonishingly lovely miniatures in any poetic tradition. Who knows if anyone will want to publish them? Probably not!

What are the best influences and inspirations of your life and your oeuvre?

I suppose I would say my ongoing astonishment merely at being alive. This seems unsurprising and unworthy of comment to many, but it strikes me as an unfathomable mystery. That is perhaps the existential question. It sits somewhat absurdly within the ruin of everyday life. I was born near the time Margaret Thatcher came to power: it has been downhill ever since, an unbroken sequence of hideous stupidity and almost incomprehensible cruelty and vandalism. People complain about Trump but he is a boy scout compared to Blair and Bush and what they did to the world. Our culture and cities are in decline: they have become tourist-trap money-mills, playgrounds for plutocrats and oligarchs where poor people get corralled into towering infernos. I would describe England today as Germany during the Weimar years, except without any sense of fun: A joyless cartoon-fascist interregnum in which the people kicked in the teeth for decades have decided to ally themselves with a decayed aristocracy while the people in-between gloat in disbelief. It is a mess. You have to travel far down forgotten roads to find anything of value now. I love the anarchists and the misfits who abhor everything, who fit in nowhere. It is the broken, the singular, the howlingly desperate whom I seek out. They inspire me. They interest me. Shared culture, global culture: it is all a kind of death, a kind of unbearable banality and pointlessness fashioned in the image of neoliberal economics.

In 2006 you came to Armenia with your films, a documentary and one animation. Your short documentary, “Hammer and Flame,” won an award at the second Golden Apricot International Film Festival. Are you a part of the British filmmaking community or you work independently?

No one in Britain is even vaguely interested in my work. If I make films, which only happens rarely, I do so totally outside of any community or industry. This is not by choice. It’s just necessity. I suppose it’s fair enough, because I am not really interested in contemporary British cinema. The number of films being made about royalty, about queens and princes, is ridiculous - there seems to be one new film on this topic every week. Who cares about this material? It’s actually obscene given what is going on in the world. And aesthetically it is just embarrassing. I suppose all of this junk sells well to Americans. The only real filmmaker of genius from these islands is Peter Greenaway, and he was essentially driven out like a heretic, forced to go and live in Holland. That tells you all you need to know about the British film industry. Does anyone even go to the cinema anymore? What is this obsession anyway with looking in one direction, like prisoners in Plato’s cave? I think people have understood how fascistic the medium has become. It’s a shame, because it can also be and at times has been such a deep and beautiful

and powerful medium. Perhaps it was too powerful. Lenin understood what it might achieve, but Hollywood won its Pyrrhic victory over his vision. The problem with film today is that it gets smeared everywhere. I cannot bear mechanical reproduction — it is so obviously the death of art, as Warhol realized decades ago! What filmmaker, after slaving for years on a project, wants to see their film streamed across the internet alongside all the rest of the nonsense that swirls around the planet? I am in fact spending less time making films. I am working more in the visual arts and performance, which seem to me much more exciting and much livelier in terms of the kind of work being made.

The second time you came to Armenia in 2014 it was to take part in the symposium of writers of Armenian origin writing in various languages. You are an author of three poetry volumes. What concerns Vaughan Pilikian as a poet?

For me poetry is the possibility of another kind of speech. What is most important in poetry is its secrecy and its mystery. The fact that it is not prose. Poetry is as mysterious as life itself and as simple, to paraphrase Celan, as a handshake. I don’t understand poetry and I hope I never will.

Are there any Armenian touches in your poetry?

Given my poor grasp of the Armenian language I am not qualified to judge this but I might quietly hope that it would somehow be the case. The Armenian language is embedded in my earliest memories. It forms a kind of penumbra around them. I suppose in some sense Armenian must be called my “father” tongue. For example, there was the way in which my father would sink into conversations of a totally different order whenever he saw my uncle, conversations that would send them striding obliviously into oncoming traffic, such was the intensity of their dialogue. Then there was the way my grandfather would sing to us when we sat down to eat. The songs he sung were terrifying and immense, like stones hung in the air. Though I understood almost none of it, Armenian was part of the echolalia of my childhood. It is inscribed on my nervous system in a way that English is not. More recently I have made fragmentary efforts to get a hold on the language. The feeling is strange, not unlike sensing some inner pulse or heartbeat that must always have been there but to which you had never previously given attention. I feel like I am unearthing myself the more I learn. Armenian has an ancient force in its diction quite unlike most European languages. I was interested to discover that, like Sanskrit in fact, it still has an instrumental case - in most modern European languages this case has disappeared or been absorbed into the ablative. At my father’s funeral I read a section in *grabar* from St. Gregory of Narek which fastened upon me with irresistible force. His prayer poems are extraordinary creations, spectacular journeys above impossible depths. I feel I could somehow spend the rest of my life diving into them and never find their limits.

What does the Armenian heritage mean to you?

Things are written deep into our being, cyphers that can take a lifetime even to discern, let alone begin to interpret or understand. You don’t choose what you inherit, and there is no question that being Armenian carries a special and peculiar force with it. I feel I am Armenian: I also feel I am American, the nationality of my mother. Am I British? I was born here and I have lived my whole life here. Now that both my parents are gone, I feel more keenly than ever how history turns through us all, how immense forces that far outreach any one of us move through us all and drive our individual destinies. There is a curious sense in being Armenian that something very precious and very fragile is at any moment about to be lost forever. I am only speaking in part here of the genocide and its reverberations. Look into Armenian history, and you see how from the earliest times the culture was under threat. Certainly I cannot really conceive of what my grandparents went through, its biblical scale. But I see now with increasing clarity how all that has come before has set me on certain irrefutable assignments and sent me down paths from which I will not return. There is a feeling of enormous and irrevocable dispossession which feels cosmological, but which of course has very particular and explicable roots. I yearn for a land, like we all do. Yet I suppose I can be certain that in this case, it really did exist, and it really was lost.

Netherlands Tougher on Migration after Granting Asylum to Armenian Family

By Elena Cavallone

THE HAGUE (euronews.com) — A small miracle happened in a residential neighborhood of the Hague. A church protected a family of Armenians from being deported. Priests and neighbors set up a non-stop mass for three months, as Dutch law prevents police from entering during a religious service.

It was an incredible experience of human solidarity, Isolde Verburgt, a close neighbor remembers.

“A lot of people that came were not believers, other yes. I think it was about heartwarming and charity, love for each other, like the church used to say. I felt like joining this initiative because I wanted to stand for all the children that should receive protection. That was the reason that led also other people to join.”

The Tamrazyan family had fled nine years ago from Armenia because the father was considered an opponent of the government. Once they arrived in the Netherlands, they had sought asylum but after five years the authorities have denied the refugee status to the whole family.

The Tamrazyan had then requested the so-

called “Kinderpardon,” which guarantees asylum to families whose children have been living in the country for at least five years.

The situation was quite difficult for the children of the family (the youngest is 12 years old), who had started their studies in the Netherlands.

Faced with a deportation executive order, the family had no other option but to ask the Church for help.

Under pressure, the government granted asylum to the family and to another 700 cases. It was a necessary step Theo Hetteema, chairman of the Hague council of protestant church

explains.

“We always have said to the government that we don’t want to take your seat: you have your own responsibility we want to cooperate, we want to think with you. But we also have our own norms and we should care about these people and we love our neighbor. We want to be serious about that and we will never stop doing that.”

But with regional and European elections coming up, the Dutch government led by the liberal Mark Rutte has since tightened asylum regulations. The so-called “Kinderpardon” will no longer apply and the country’s intake of refugees from UN camps will be cut from 750 to 500.

Community News

Akçam to Speak on Denial of Armenian Genocide and Talat Pasha

FRESNO – Dr. Taner Akçam, the Kaloosdian and Mugar Professor of Armenian Genocide Studies at Clark University, will speak on “The Denial of Armenian Genocide and the Killing Order of Talat Pasha” on Friday, March 15, at 7:30 p.m., in the Satellite Student Union (2485 E. San Ramon, enter at Barstow and Maple Aves.), at Fresno State.

The presentation is part of the Armenian Studies Program Spring 2019 Lecture Series and is co-sponsored by the Knights of Vartan, Yeprad Lodge.

A unique feature of the Armenian Genocide has been the long-standing efforts of successive Turkish governments to deny its historicity and to hide the documentary evidence surrounding it. Denialists claimed that there was no central decision taken by Ottoman authorities to exterminate the Armenians and all available documents that indicate otherwise are either fake or were doctored by Armenians.

Akçam, with his latest book, brings to light documents either hidden or destroyed by the Turkish government that contain the killing orders, as well as demonstrates the authenticity of these orders, which had been sign by Ottoman Interior Minister Talat Pasha.

As such, this work removes a cornerstone from



Prof. Taner Akçam

the denialist edifice and represent an earthquake in the field of Armenian Genocide and will contribute enormously to the fight for recognition.

Historian and sociologist Akçam, one of the first Turkish intellectuals to acknowledge and openly discuss the Armenian Genocide, holds the only endowed chair dedicated to research and teaching on this subject. As Robert Aram and Marianne Kaloosdian and Stephen and Marian Mugar Professor of Armenian Genocide Studies at the Strassler Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies at Clark University, he is committed to research, teaching, and training future scholars. An outspoken advocate of democracy and free expression since his student days at Middle East Technical University in Ankara, he is an internationally recognized human rights activist.

Akçam received his PhD in 1995 from the University of Hanover with a dissertation titled, “Turkish Nationalism and the Armenian Genocide: On the Background of the Military Tribunals in Istanbul between 1919 and 1922.”

He is the author of *The Young Turks' Crime Against Humanity: The Armenian Genocide and Ethnic Cleansing in the Ottoman Empire* (2012); *Judgment at Istanbul: The Armenian Genocide Trials, with Vahakn Dadrian* (2011); and *A Shameful Act: Armenian Genocide and the Question of Turkish Responsibility*, (2006).

The lecture is free and open to the public.



Dr. Varazdat Avedisyan is the head of the IT department.

A Success Story of a JNF Scholarship Recipient from Gavar University

GAITHERSBURG, Md. – Varazdat Avetisyan is a good example of a determined and hardworking person, who can efficiently put his skills into practice, who never gives up and stays in control of his forward motion. His story can inspire many people and help them believe that they should look for new opportunities, and strive for more.

Apart from working, 28-year-old Varazdat, a computer programmer by specialty, has dived into science, which has helped him to become a Candidate of Science, Head of the Chair. In 2007, he entered the Gavar State University (GSU), Department of Informatics and Computing Engineering and earned a Bachelor's Degree with a Diploma of Honor in 2011. Soon after, he successfully finished a two-year MA course in the same Department. During his four-year education at the Bachelor's Degree, he was involved in the Fund for Armenian Relief's (FAR) Jerar Nishanian Foundation (JNF) Scholarship Program, which fully compensated his tuition and eased the burden of Varazdat's family. The scholarship has enabled Varazdat to fully focus on his study and not worry about the payment thus pursuing his dream.

“A few years ago, my friends and I managed to meet with Mr. Jerar Nishanian and Mrs. Anahit Nishanian at Gavar State University. Through our warm and candid talk, I realized that he is a very industrious, business-oriented, persistent person, and a big patriot. He seemed very outgoing and outspoken to us. His characteristic features guided my behavior in my adult life. I will do my best to prove that I received Jerar Nishanian Scholarship for a reason,” recalls Avetisyan.

For his excellent performance at the university, he twice received the Fund for Armenian Relief (FAR) certificate; in 2011 he became the best student of the GSU, and two years later - the best student of Armenia. In 2014, the Armenian Student Association made him the Best Students of the Year.

Since 2002, FAR has been providing Jerar Nishanian Scholarship to students. In the course of 16 years, hundreds GSU students have been provided with an opportunity to pursue higher education thanks to the scholarship. Since 2011, Nishanian Scholarship is also provided to the students of the Armenian National Polytechnic University and the National University of Architecture and Construction in Yerevan.

“I continued my education in postgraduate studies thus laying a foundation for my academic career. Between 2013 and 2016, I studied at the Institute for Informatics and Automation Problems of NAS RA, and did my thesis of the Candidate of Technical Science on “Mathematical and Software Support for Computing Machines, Complexes, Systems, and Networks,” remarked Avetisyan, the only PhD holder of the Nishanian Scholarship.

Upon completing bachelor's studies and since 2011, Avetisyan has been working at the Department of Information Technologies in GSU first as a programmer then, five years later, - the chair.

After earning the master's degree, Avetisyan started teaching at the chair of Informatics and Physics and Mathematics of the GSU, and since May 2017, he has been giving lectures at the Microsoft Imagine Academy of the National

see JNF, page 7

GALAS Relaunches College Scholarships For LGBTQ Students and Advocates

WEST HOLLYWOOD – The Gay and Lesbian Armenian Society (GALAS) will once again offer scholarships to students of Armenian descent who have demonstrated LGBTQ activism. GALAS scholarships have been an integral part of the organization's community outreach programs.

As part of its 20th year expanded outreach and education initiatives, GALAS will award one \$2,000 scholarship and two \$1,000 scholarships for the Spring 2019 semester. The scholarship program aims at supporting Armenian students who contribute to cultivating visibility and acceptance for LGBTQ narratives and experiences.

“Supporting inspirational LGBTQ and allied student leaders on their educational journeys with crucial financial and community support is a priority for GALAS,” states GALAS President Haig Boyadjian. “Too often, we see many young members of the Armenian LGBTQ community ostracized by their families and in need of an extra push in their educational pursuits.”

The deadline for submitting applications is February 28, 2019. The GALAS Spring 2019 Scholarships application can be found on galasla.org/galas-annual-scholarship.

In its 20th year, GALAS is committed to expanding and further developing robust outreach and education programming to bring visibility to LGBTQ Armenian voices and create resources and safe spaces for LGBTQ Armenian youth, as well as their families and allies. GALAS Scholarships are one of the many initiatives that GALAS has planned for its 20th year. Other programs include outreach and presentations on LGBTQ topics to schools with large Armenian populations, as well as Soorj Sessions: roundtable conversations that are hosted regularly between LGBTQ Armenians, their parents, families and friends to explore understanding and acceptance of LGBTQ identities and individuals.

For additional information on the GALAS Spring 2019 Scholarships e-mail info@galasla.org.

NH State Sen. D'Allesandro To Speak at Holy Trinity

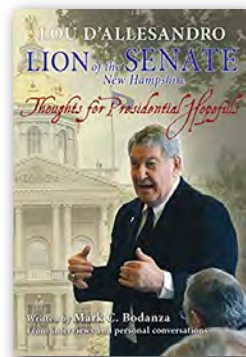
CAMBRIDGE, Mass. – Holy Trinity Armenian Church and the Trinity Men's Union will welcome state Sen. Lou D'Allesandro of New Hampshire for a luncheon and book talk on Sunday, March 24, at 12:30 p.m.

D'Allesandro will discuss the book written about his extraordinary career in politics, *Lion of the New Hampshire Senate and Thoughts for Presidential Hopefuls*. The program will take place at the Charles and Nevart Talanian Cultural Hall of Holy Trinity Church, 145 Brattle St.

For more than a generation, D'Allesandro has been a force in New Hampshire politics and on the national stage. His brand of grassroots politics, relatability and the genuine relationships he has forged with voters

have made D'Allesandro the go-to source for presidential hopefuls seeking to understand the political landscape for the New Hampshire primary. He has been sought for his advice, counsel and friendship by Bill Clinton, Joe Biden and Elizabeth Edwards, to name a few. Yet, this is a story about more than politics. The exchange promises to touch on themes of trust, leadership, humble service and American opportunity.

Donation for the luncheon is \$8 and a Lenten option will be available. Tickets will be sold at the door. For further information, contact the Holy Trinity Church Office, office@htaac.org.





COMMUNITY NEWS

Tekeyan Cultural Association Delegation Visits Glendale Armenian Consulate

GLENDAL — A delegation of representatives of the Tekeyan Cultural Association of the United States and Canada (TCA) visited the Consulate of the Republic of Armenia in Glendale on February 18 to meet with Consul-General Dr. Armen Baibourtian and Counselor Varazdat Pahlavuni. The Tekeyan representatives included TCA Executive Director Aram Arkun, TCA Los Angeles Chapter Chairman Parsegh Kartalian, TCA Pasadena-Glendale Chapter Vice-Chairman Kevork Keushkerian, who is also a member of the TCA Central Board of Trustees, and TCA Metro Los Angeles Chapter Chairman Carl Bardakian.

During the meeting, issues concerning both Armenia and the diaspora were discussed. Baibourtian remarked that this year was the 25th anniversary of the founding of the consulate, otherwise known as “Mer Doon,” so that several events were being planned in its celebration. He expressed his readiness to collaborate with TCA in the cultural realm and stressed in this respect the key goals of preservation of Armenian identity, the strengthening of bonds with Armenia and the familiarization of Americans with Armenian culture.

Baibourtian noted that he has visited California capital of Sacramento and invited the president of the Senate to visit Armenia in 2020. He added that on the same day, State Sen. Anthony Portantino, known as a staunch supporter of the Armenian community, proposed the reestablishment of the California-Armenia Trade Office which had ceased operations in 2008.

Baibourtian observed that he has begun a program in conjunction with local public schools. He has invited two students from Hoover High School to work in the consulate as interns. He also declared that he is striving to establish good ties with other ethnic groups living in the Los Angeles metropolitan region, including Mexicans, Thais and Lithuanians. For example, he organized a conference for the Mexican and Armenian communities which will take place May 21-23.

The Tekeyan delegation in turn spoke about TCA's lectures, concerts and various cultural activities in the Los Angeles region. Arkun and the local TCA chapter leadership expressed the desire to support the activities of the consulate as well as to collaborate in a practical fashion wherever possible.



From left, Kevork Keushkerian, Parsegh Kartalian, Armen Baibourtian, Carl Bardakian, Aram Arkun

A Success Story of a JNF Scholarship Recipient From Gavar University

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Polytechnic University of Armenia. In 2015, he co-founded Luseen Technologies Information technology Center (www.luseen.am). So far, he has been working as a trainer in the center.

Last September, he was selected as the chair of the GSU Department of Informatics and Physics and Mathematical Sciences.

“I prepared for the meeting, but I was restless, although I managed to draw the attention of the members of the Scientific Council to my five-year concept on development and reforms of the chair of Informatics and Physics and Mathematics. I think the mission of the Chair is to prepare a competitive workforce who can meet the up-to-date requirements of the labor market. So, I represented my approaches on



Meeting with Anahid and Jerar Nishanian

how I see it happening,” said Avetisyan, highlighting the importance of a continuous cooperation with the Information Technologies Institutions of the province, as well as with the Armenian and international established IT companies.

“I made a very responsible decision to apply for the job; however, I will strengthen my efforts to implement this program,” noted Avetisyan. He is a member of the GSU Scientific Council and an author of 10 scientific articles. He has participated in 15 international workshops and trainings in Italy, Germany, Austria, Sweden, England, Spain, and Bulgaria.

Avetisyan is also active in public sector; as a member of the Gavar Council, he tries to bring his expertise and knowledge to his hometown.

At the end of 2018, Avetisyan made another important decision and got married.

I wish Varazdat Avetisyan new achievements in his personal life and career. Way to go Varazdat!

Yeretsgin Anahid
Gaithersburg, MD



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COMMUNITY NEWS

Manhattanville College Hosts Program On 'Living in Post-Truth World'

PURCHASE, N.Y. — Truth – What is it? Why is it important? Can we live well without it? With the rise of “fake news” and “alternative facts,” these questions are central concerns for our world today. Some scholars conclude that we now live in a “post-truth world,” where facts have become irrelevant in our own lives and in the choices and actions of our leaders. What does it mean to live in a “post-truth world?” And, more importantly, how are we to defend and promote truth in such a world?

The Manhattanville Philosophy Department, in association with the World Religions and Political Science Departments, invites all students, educators, community members, and lovers of truth to this year's Mary T. Clark Event. This year, the event will span two days, from April 1 to 2, and welcome various speakers to discuss the central theme, “Living in a Post-Truth World.”

Speakers will include Mary Ellen Bork, American human rights activist, Armen Morian, Assistant Attorney General for the State of New York, Antonia Arslan, author and professor at the University of Padua; Marco Liviero, professor of literature at Eton College, and more. When available, the full schedule of events and speakers will be released on the Manhattanville Philosophy Department webpage.

The event will conclude with the annual Mary T. Clark Lecture at 6 p.m. on the 2nd, to be delivered this year by Bishop Anoushavan Tanielian, Prelate of the Eastern Prelacy of the Armenian Apostolic Church. An ensemble of Armenian dancers will perform before the lecture.

At Reid Castle, Manhattanville College, 2900 Purchase Street, Purchase, NY 10577.

Speakers begin at 1 p.m. on both days. Refreshments will be served throughout. Attendance is free of charge.



Antonia Arslan

OBITUARY

George Manoogian Engineer, Dedicated to Family

DETROIT — George Manoogian, the husband of the late Margaret Manoogian, died in February. He was 93.

He leaves his children Linda (Jeffrey) Heath and Douglas Manoogian; grandchildren Jason (Jennifer) Heath, Gregory (Lindsey) Heath, and Christine (Ryan) DePietro and great-grandchildren Charles and William Heath and Matthew DePietro.

George Manoogian was born in 1925 in Athens, Greece to Tacvor and Tachooi Manoogian, where his family lived after fleeing from Izmir, Turkey.

The youngest of five children, he immigrated to America with his brother Charles at the age of 12.

He began his American education on the east side of Detroit where he became a strong student and enjoyed sports particularly speed skating.

He played basketball and baseball for the Armenian Church league and became an active member of the Armenian Church and the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU).

Upon high school graduation, he enrolled at Wayne State with medicine in mind, but the family business pulled him in a different direction.

He excelled as a screw machine setup man at Masco while attending engineering classes in the evening.

During this time, he met his future wife, Marge Vartabedian, at an AGBU meeting at the age of 23 and became engaged to her within six months. They celebrated their wedding with 500 guests at the newly built cultural hall on

Garbis Kazandjian

WAYNE, N.J. — Garbis Kazandjian, an active member of the Armenian community in New Jersey, died on February 21. He was 89.

He was married to Arshalouis Kazandjian. He leaves his children Hasmig, Lia, Nigol and Hrair Kazandjian, and one sister, Alice Kazandjian.

He was a longtime member of the Sts. Vartanantz Church and a well-known journalist, publisher, Armenian Radio Hour of New Jersey newscaster and a very active member of the Armenian community.

Funeral services were held at Sts. Vartanantz Armenian Apostolic Church in Ridgefield, NJ on February 25. A graveside service followed at East Ridgelawn Cemetery, Clifton, NJ.



Oakman Boulevard.

Four years later, they were blessed to begin their family with the birth of Linda and then Douglas.

It was during this period that his career continued to advance when he joined the engineering department at Masco Screw Products on Ford Road.

He soon began his management career. He was quickly respected for his engineering prowess and his ability to work efficiently with others. Over the years, George advanced to upper management and was the divisional operating executive of two manufacturing companies.

He was dedicated to his family.

His was passionate about his garden where he would lose himself for hours in the sanctuary of nature. He learned to grow dahlias from his brother Alex, and his skill in raising beautiful specimens was admired by many. He never tired of his love for gardening and it was a passion that he enjoyed even this past summer.

For years, George enjoyed playing golf at Oakland Hills with his close Armenian friends, together they shared many great memories.

Following his retirement, when not on the golf course, George could be found playing gin rummy.

The funeral service was held at St. John Armenian Church, Southfield, on Friday, February 15. Interment followed at White Chapel Cemetery, Troy.

Arrangements entrusted to Edward Korkoian Funeral Home.

New Adult Conference Added to St. Nersess Summer Conferences

ARMONK, N.Y. — St. Nersess Armenian Seminary is announcing that it will add a new conference for adults to its lineup of popular summer and winter conferences for high school and college students.

The inaugural Adult Conference is open to all adults, whether a summer conference alumnus or first-time participant. This new session, titled “Be Still and Know That I Am God,” will take place June 6-9, and will be directed by Elise Antreassian and Nancy Basmajian, with Fr. Mardiros Chevian serving as the chaplain.

The conference will give attendees the opportunity to get away from the “noise” of everyday.

In particular, the adult conference will focus on all the ways to draw closer to God.

Each day will feature worship using traditional Armenian prayer with active participation, candlelit prayer walks, art as spiritual expression, a brief period — and a single meal — shared in silence (the hardest for modern people to handle but oh so important), and journaling exercises. Class sessions such as “Pilgrim's Purpose,” “What is Prayer?” “St. Gregory of Narek as Mentor,” “Encountering God in Scripture,” “Sacramental Living” and “The Church as Nourishing Mother.”

Interested adults can register online at www.stnersess.edu. Space is limited.

The Adult Conference was developed from a one-day adult faith formation retreat held at St. Nersess Seminary by the Adult Christian Education (ACE) ministry team of Holy Trinity Church in Cheltenham, PA, last June.

In addition to the adults' conference, there will be a Deacons' Training Program, June 28-July 7, a High School Summer Conference July 26-August 4 and a College Winter Conference January 2-6, 2020.

At the Deacons' Training Program, young men gain a deeper understanding of the church's worship services through practical workshops and interactive classes. Students are placed in classes according to experience. In Level I, students are introduced to the duties of an acolyte. In Levels II and III, students are introduced to liturgical practicum. All students

take Armenian classes and voice lessons. Upon completion of the program, students return to their home parishes with polished liturgical skills and a stronger faith.

The popular High School Summer Conference has attracted teenagers to explore their faith and the heritage of the Armenian Church with friends in a safe environment. Clergy and lay leaders instruct the participants in the fundamentals of the Armenian Church's faith and traditions, and they encourage frank



High School Summer Conference, 2018

discussion about issues important to young people. We also address topics of interest to youth and parents today.

Finally, the seminary is bringing back the College Winter Conference in January 2020, a favorite among college students! Students can plan to spend five days of their winter break on the tranquil seminary campus over the Armenian Christmas weekend. This conference will include sessions on the Armenian Church's faith and traditions and topics of interest for college students. The application will be forthcoming.

Since its inception in 1963, the St. Nersess youth conferences have made daily worship, the study of our faith and traditions, bible study, and Armenian language instruction appealing and inspiring for students. In addition, sports and recreation, day-trips, and other activities are offered to add to a well-rounded experience where students make deep, lasting friendships and discover their place in the Armenian Church. For more information or to register, go to www.stnersess.edu.

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Assembly Leaders Meet with Armenian Caucus Members

WASHINGTON — With the new Congress underway, Armenian Assembly of America Co-Chair Anthony Barsamian, Executive Director Bryan Ardouny, and Grassroots and

which the Assembly is pleased to welcome Rep. Anthony Brindisi (D-NY), Rep. TJ Cox (D-CA), Rep. Jason Crow (D-CO), Rep. Dave Joyce (R-OH), Rep. Andy Levin (D-MI), and Rep. Juan Vargas (D-CA), bringing the Armenian Caucus to 108 Members.

“As a proud Armenian American, I am excited to join the Congressional Armenian Caucus. We must remember the lessons of the Armenian Genocide and ensure these atrocities never happen again. I look forward to working with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to represent our Armenian American communities and strengthen US-Armenian relations,” stated Brindisi, a freshman congressman of Armenian descent.

“I am proud to join my colleagues on the Congressional Caucus on Armenian Issues,” Rep. Dave Joyce (R-OH) expressed to the Armenian Assembly. “I look forward to continuing the Caucus’ efforts

to ensure Armenian-American communities across the country, especially those in Ohio, are properly represented in Washington.”

“I’m thrilled to join the Congressional Armenian Caucus this Congress! I look forward to working on US policy matters of interest to our Armenian American community in California’s 51st Congressional District and



Armenian Assembly Executive Director Bryan Ardouny and House Majority Leader Rep. Steny Hoyer (D-MD)

Development Associate Mariam Khaloyan held numerous meetings on the Hill discussing issues of concern from robust assistance to support Armenia’s democratic reforms to prioritizing passage of a congressional resolution reaffirming the Armenian Genocide. In addition, the Assembly urged Members to join the Congressional Caucus on Armenian Issues, of

to ensure Armenian-American communities across the country, especially those in Ohio, are properly represented in Washington.”



Armenian Assembly Grassroots & Development Associate Mariam Khaloyan, Rep. Dave Joyce (R-OH), and Armenian Assembly Public Affairs Associate Danielle Saroyan Ashbahian



Armenian Assembly Grassroots & Development Associate Mariam Khaloyan, Rep. Raja Krishnamoorthi (D-IL), and Assembly Executive Director Bryan Ardouny



Armenian Assembly Grassroots & Development Associate Mariam Khaloyan, Rep. Katherine Clark (D-MA), Assembly Co-Chair Anthony Barsamian, and Assembly Executive Director Bryan Ardouny

around our country,” Rep. Juan Vargas (D-CA) said to the Armenian Assembly.

“Many Armenian Americans call the Central Valley home, and I’m proud to represent them here in Congress. I’m honored to join the Congressional Armenian Caucus and look forward to strengthening the bonds that unite our two countries,” Rep. TJ Cox (D-CA) told the Armenian Assembly.

“The Armenian community is a vital part of Colorado sixth’s district and as a member of the Armenian Caucus, I look forward to working

with our local Armenian leaders and helping serve as the community’s advocate in Congress,” Rep. Jason Crow (D-CO) stated.

“We appreciate the enthusiastic response from the Members in joining the Armenian Caucus. During these first few months of the new Congress, it is important for Representatives to hear from their constituents. We urge our nationwide network of state chairs and activists to continue to reach out to their elected officials,” stated Khaloyan.

Ardouny and Khaloyan held meetings with various congressional offices, such as Representatives Katherine Clark (D-MA) and Raja Krishnamoorthi (D-IL), and congratulated Armenian Caucus Leaders on their re-election, including Caucus Co-Chairs Congressmen Frank Pallone, Jr. (D-NJ) and Gus Bilirakis (R-FL). During the meeting with Bilirakis, they discussed several key issues as well as the Congressman’s leadership role in the Armenian Caucus. They also attended swearing-in ceremonies for Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe (US Helsinki Commission) Senate Ranking Member Ben Cardin (D-MD), in addition to Senator Chris Van Hollen (D-MD), House Majority Leader Congressman Steny Hoyer (D-MD), and freshman Congressman David Trone (D-MD), among others.

Since its inception, the Armenian Caucus has played a critical leadership role in the House of Representatives on a wide range of issues, including assistance programs for Armenia, humanitarian aid to Artsakh, trade initiatives, addressing the ongoing Azerbaijani and Turkish blockades against Armenia, the Nagorno Karabakh peace process, and US reaffirmation of the Armenian Genocide. Since independence, Armenia has not wavered from its commitment to the most important values shared with the United States: a commitment to democracy and a free market economy.



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COMMUNITY NEWS



Protesters in Glendale at the City Council hearing (photo: Raul Roa/Los Angeles Times)

Glendale Passes New ‘Right to Lease Ordinance,’ Attempting to Curb Rising Rental Prices

By Monique Svazlian
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

GLENDALÉ, Calif. – After a months-long debate on the future of rent stabilization in the city of Glendale, City Council members passed a “right-to-lease” ordinance in a 3-0 vote during the February 12 City Council

livelihoods and tenants, represented by predominately Armenian and immigrant community members, saying they are being forcefully relocated out of the community. In a surprise last minute twist, Mayor Zareh Sinanyan, a lone voice of support for rent control on the City Council, was forced to recuse himself upon the recommendation of City Attorney Mike Garcia, who determined that comments he had made on

Gharpetian. Ara Najarian was also forced to recuse himself because of prior interest in rental properties owned in Glendale. Although “right-to-lease” has been sold by council members as rent control, this measure is in fact not rent control and does nothing to address curbing runaway rent increases that are forcing long-time residents out of the city of Glendale. It calls for a mandatory one-year lease offered to tenants during

But Armenians in the community are outraged, both at the Armenian City Council members who did not live up to promises of protecting their rights, as well as the fact that they are having to make tough decisions on whether to leave their beloved community or be forced to pay exorbitant rents.

“I’ve lived in the same building in Glendale for 24 years with my sister and my 90-year-old mother. My rent has increased from \$1,500 to \$2,050 in the last year and a half. The building was built in 1960 and is not in good condition. Landlords are always changing hands and now they’ve sold the building to a property management company who doesn’t take good care of the building. The majority of Armenians who lived in this building have left as they can no longer afford these rising rents. Unfortunately, I can’t leave as I am the sole care-taker of my mother,” says Sofia Azarian, who helped collect over 500 signatures during a unsuccessful attempt last year by local tenants to gather 11,500 signatures to put rent control on the city ballot.

Members of the Armenian community and other minority groups have been activated in joining the push for rent control through the Glendale Tenants Union (<http://www.GlendaleTenants.org> or www.facebook.com/GlendaleTenants), a grassroots community-led organization whose efforts have resulted in rent control becoming the number one issue for the city. They have been holding rallies in front of City Hall since July and encouraging community members to make their voices heard.

“Right-to-lease” does nothing but offer a conciliatory pat on the head for tenants forced out of their homes and communities, and we therefore condemn both the futility of “right-to-lease” and the mockery our council made of democracy in order to force it through. If council thinks this will somehow silence the tenants movement in our city, they are sorely mistaken,” said Glendale Tenants Union member, Mike Van Gorder.



Protesters in Glendale at the City Council hearing (photo: Raul Roa/Los Angeles Times)

meeting. The chambers were filled with landlords and tenants who for months have been pleading their case. A clear divide could be heard with landlords arguing that a rent control measure would be an attack on their

Armenian television a few weeks prior were “biased” and constituted grounds for recusal. The only remaining council members who voted in favor of “right-to-lease” were Paula Devine, Vrej Agajanian and Vartan

which period rents cannot be raised, as well as relocation fees if the tenant refuses any increases above 7 percent, based on the length of time the tenant has resided in the unit.



COMMUNITY NEWS

Armenian Rose Float to Participate in 2020 Pasadena Tournament of Roses

LOS ANGELES — The American Armenian Rose Float Association (AARFA) has announced that it has been invited by the Pasadena Tournament of Roses Association to present a new Armenian rose float at the next Pasadena Tournament of Roses, on January 1, 2020. This will be the sixth consecutive year that an Armenian rose float will participate in the world-renowned event.

The most recent Armenian Rose Float, which carried the theme “Chanting Stones: Karahunj,” celebrated the greatness of Armenian culture, echoing the general theme of the 130th Pasadena Tournament of Roses, “The Melody of Life.” On New Year’s Day, 2019, the Pasadena Tournament of Roses was seen by close to 700,000 spectators in Pasadena, as well as a global audience in 140 countries and territories.

Last month, the Pasadena Tournament of Roses Association announced the 2020 tournament’s general theme, which is “The Power of Hope.” Accordingly, the AARFA is already at work, seeking to conceive the design of the next Armenian Rose Float and mobilize the Armenian community for ensuring the float’s success. As in the past, the AARFA elected a new Board this month, and is initiating a new campaign for rallying grassroots support.

The Armenian Rose Float was launched in 2014. One of its major proponents was Stepan Partamian, a founding member of the AARFA who has served on its Board ever since its establishment that year. Partamian stepped down from the AARFA Board this month, as he plans to move to Armenia in June and focus on developing his Genolive project.

“Today, as our vision of participating in the Pasadena Tournament of Roses has become a wonderful reality, I am

turning to my next major project, the Genolive initiative, confident that the newly-elected Board of the AARFA will do a marvelous job,” Partamian said.

“To date, we have successfully showcased five Armenian floats, with the help of all our benefactors and volunteers. Let’s keep it going,” said Arthur Kokozyan, a member of

the AARFA Board.

Toward the implementation of the 2020 Armenian rose float, tax-deductible contributions can be made online at www.aarfa.org or sent to the following address: American Armenian Rose Float Association, P.O. Box 60005, Pasadena, CA 91116.



The 2019 Armenian Rose Float Entry, titled “Chanting Stones: Karahunj”



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COMMUNITY NEWS

Roupen Herian

Rescuer of Orphans Remembered by the TCA Metro LA Chapter

HERIAN, from page 1

The master of ceremonies, Carl Bardakian, chairman of the TCA Metro LA chapter, offered brief welcoming remarks. He introduced Kana Hovhannisyan, second secretary of the Republic of Armenia's Consulate General in Los Angeles, who spoke poignantly about Herian and the importance of his great sacrifices.

Bardakian then introduced Arkun, who presented a detailed overview of the incredible life Herian lived. In particular, he noted that Herian was not driven by narrow political ideology. He started out as a member of the Hnchag Party, became a Reformed Hnchag, and then a member of the Armenian Democratic Party, the predecessor of the Armenian Democratic Liberal Party. Though a dedicated member of his party, he worked with many other organizations for the betterment of the Armenian people and nation.

Arkun noted that Herian was born in Tokat sometime between 1868 and 1872, and later worked in Constantinople, before immigrating to Boston and afterwards moving to New York City. He became a successful businessman in the tobacco industry, while continuing to be deeply involved in Armenian political activities.

In 1916 he carried out a secret war mission for the British government.

Herian helped arrange the transportation of many of the 1,200 Armenian-Americans who joined the Armenian Legion, which successfully defeated the Turkish and German forces at the Battle of Arara in Palestine in September 1918, and himself later enrolled as a legionnaire though he was older than most of the other volunteers. In fact, he was often called the "grey-haired youth" due to his enthusiasm and energy.

Herian served as the director of an infirmary in Egypt for the legionnaires, and participated in an abortive expedition to help the besieged city of Hadjin in Cilicia. He also played a role in the defense of the Cilician city of Dört Yol (Chork-Marzban).

As representative of the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU), Egyptian Armenian Relief and [Armenian] United Orphan Care, with additional financial support from the Armenian Church, the Armenian Democratic Party (predecessor of the Armenian Democratic Liberal Party), various other Armenian relief organizations, and, most strikingly, many individual Armenians who themselves barely had enough money to live after the Genocide, Herian tried to rescue kidnapped Armenian women and children from the Bedouins, Turks, Kurds and their harems. Using his adept linguistic skills, Herian disguised himself as needed as an American missionary, British official or Bedouin, primarily in the Aleppo, Der Zor and Mosul regions, to carry out his mission. Despite threats of death and robbery and facing great resistance from those who did not want to easily relinquish Armenian women and children from their hold, Herian remained valiant. He used persuasion, money and sometimes threats to rescue Armenian women and children from their captors.

Arkun noted that Herian was a moving and effective speaker who participated in fundraising activities in the United States, France, the Ottoman Empire and Egypt with the intent to rescue more women and orphans. His untimely death in Cairo, Egypt on July 7, 1921, prevented him from fulfilling those plans. He was to have gotten married only a few days later.

Recognized at the program was Hratch Manoukian, whose father, Nazaret Manoukian, was a member of the Armenian Legion and fought at the Battle of Arara. He also was a military policeman in



Kana Hovhannisyan



Carl Bardakian



Aram Arkun, left, accepts a book from Carl Bardakian.



Alique Bardakian (center) of the Patille Dance Studio of Pasadena

Adana. Two others recognized were Hagop Mardirossian, whose father was saved by Roupen Herian and taken to an orphanage in Jerusalem, and Irena Varjabedian, whose grandmother was born in the town of Aksehir in the province of Konya, and saved by Herian.

Participating in the program were the dancers of the Patille Dance Studio of Pasadena, under the direction of Patille and

Cynthia Albarian.

Roupen Herian made many personal sacrifices to serve the Armenian people, in part by means of the Armenian Legion, Armenian Democratic Party, Armenian National Union and AGBU. He remains a great patriot and hero of the Armenian nation, whose bravery, determination and selflessness led to the rescue of countless Armenian orphans and women.

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Arts & Living

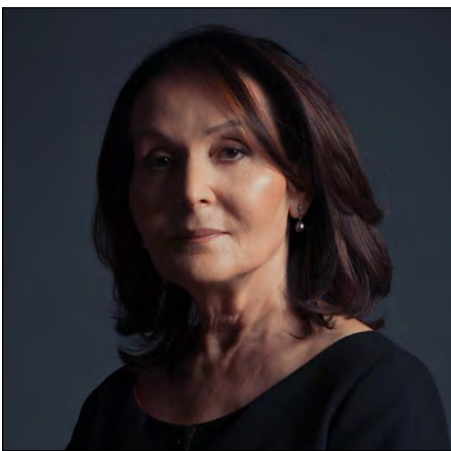
TCA Presents Literary and Musical Program in Glendale

GLENDALÉ — The Tekeyan Cultural Association Los Angeles Chapter, in collaboration with the Tekeyan Cultural Association Metro Los Angeles Chapter, present a program on the rich literary legacy of the poet Vahan Tekeyan and the activity of the Tekeyan Cultural Association (TCA) to take place Sunday, March 10 at the Glendale Public Library.

Parsegh Kartalian, chairman of the TCA Los Angeles Chapter, will serve as the master of ceremonies. The main speakers will be Doctors Krikor Adanalian and Tamara Hovhannisyan. Adanalian, a cardiologist originally from



Dr. Krikor Adanalian



Dr. Tamara Hovhannisyan

Aleppo, will lecture about the more than 70 years of productive cultural activity of TCA. Hovhannisyan, a poet, gallery owner and literary critic, as well as a former staff member of the Monterey Institute of International Studies, will lecture about Vahan Tekeyan as a poet and man of letters. The program will be in the Armenian language.

Kartalian said, “I believe this program will be entertaining and informative. The poet Vahan Tekeyan has played an important role in our modern culture and deserves to be better known, while the efforts of the Tekeyan Cultural Association over the decades to promote and advance Armenian culture in many parts of the world is a story of dedication and sacrifice that has allowed several generations of Armenians a deep connection to their roots. Our March event includes very talented musicians as well as renowned speakers.”

Melo Ekizian, a graduate of the Melkonian Educational Institute, is an expressive and talented reciter who will present some pieces of poetry, while the musical portion of the evening

see GLENDALE, page 15



The VEM Ensemble

Tekeyan Sponsors VEM Ensemble 2019 Tour to Detroit, Montreal, Boston and LA

WESTWOOD, Calif. — The VEM Ensemble is making a North American tour with performances in Detroit (March 27), Montreal (March 29), Boston (March 31), and Glendale (April 27) and Altadena, California (May 19), organized with the Tekeyan Cultural Association of the United States and Canada. A new musical piece based on the poetry of Vahan Tekeyan will receive its premiere during this tour and musical masterpieces by Gomidas, Khachaturian, and Western classical composers will comprise the rest of the program. The concerts are sponsored by the Tekeyan Cultural Association of the United States and Canada, with support from the UCLA Armenian Music program at the UCLA Herb Alpert School of Music.

The VEM Ensemble consists of the VEM Graduate String Quartet, in residence at the UCLA Herb Alpert School of Music, and a singer, currently mezzo-soprano Danielle Segen. VEM means “rock” in Armenian, symbolizing the strength and power of this ensemble to bring to live music written by prominent and emerging Armenian composers.

The ensemble is the cornerstone of the newly created Armenian Music Program at UCLA, which, thanks to generous donor support as well as artistic guidance of



VEM Artistic Director Movses Pogossian

endeavors to raise awareness and celebrate the richness and diversity of Armenian musical tradition. As part of their studies, members of the quartet strive to cultivate an appreciation and passion for Armenian music throughout the community through musical performances, music education, outreach services, and a series of collaborations with composers to

create new works dedicated to and enriching the Armenian cultural heritage. The VEM Quartet, coached by its artistic director, Movses Pogossian, has worked with such musicians as Kim Kashkashian, Seth Knopp, David Starobin, Nickolas Kitchen and Tigran Mansurian. In his review of their performance at the Incontri in Terra di Sierra Festival in Tuscany, Italy, critic Laurence Vittes writes: “The evening’s most memorable music was made by the VEM Quartet...who laid out Eduard Mirzoyan’s *String Quartet* with a feline, subtle grace that touched hearts with its gentle melodic content and long-lined eloquence.”

Artashes Kartalyan: Tekeyan Triptych

An exciting world premiere to be presented during this 2019 tour is of the recently completed *Tekeyan Triptych* by Artashes Kartalyan, commissioned by the Tekeyan Cultural Association in 2018. This is a remarkable composition structured around three poems by Vahan Tekeyan (1875-1945), widely regarded as the “Prince of Armenian Poetry.” Its poetic choices, focusing on two love poems followed by a meditation on what one leaves behind, combined with intricate musicality, promises to make the *Tekeyan Triptych* one of the composer’s masterpieces.

The first song opens with a poem describing with utmost subtlety the depth of the poet’s love (surprising for one who was known as a recluse). In it, he laments how not one of his loves realizes the extent of his affection, leaving his love unrequited. Over five stanzas, Tekeyan expounds on the intensity of his love and the sad

see VEM, page 14

Scholars in Venice Conduct A Journey Through Armenian Art

By Muriel Mirak-Weissbach

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

VENICE — Venice has a long history of relations with Armenia, which most people associate with the Mekhitarist monastery on the island of San Lazzaro, with its imposing church and magnificent library. But Venice also hosts an important center of Armenian studies, at the Ca’ Foscari university, which has a Chair for Medieval Art History and for Armenian Language and Literature. On February 21-22, the university, in collaboration with the Center for Studies and Documentation of Armenian Art and the Association Internationales des Études Arméniennes, hosted an international conference called “Armenian Art: Critical History and New Perspectives.”

Gathering specialists from Armenia, France, Germany, the Czech Republic and Italy, the conference aimed at providing new impetus for Armenian studies, in a venue associated with the names of such renowned past experts as Paolo Cuneo, Adriano Alpago Novello and Gianclaudio Macchiarella. The Ca’ Foscari university, continuing its mission as a center for cultural encounter, seeks to place new emphasis on the study of Armenian art in the Venetian context.

“The relationship between Venice and the Armenians in intense and fruitful,” Aldo Ferrari, professor of Armenian Language and Literature explained. “In the course of centuries Armenians have lived in the city as merchants, pilgrims, monks, printers and artists. It is no coincidence,” he went on, “that the first book printed in Armenian was published in Venice, back in 1512. In 1717, the Venetian Republic, known as La Serenissima, gave permission to the monastic congregation of Abbot MeKhitar to settle on the island of Lazzaro and thus to begin an extraordinary experience which provided the impetus for the cultural renaissance of the Armenian people.” And, he added, “also in Venice, the Moorat Raphael college was established, where a significant part of the Armenian cultural elite studied to the end of the 20th century.”

Ca’ Foscari inaugurated its chair for Armenian Language and Literature in 1976. The study of Armenian art, which is located here, represents an extraordinary patrimony that has ignited the enthusiasm of all those who have come into contact with it. “Already back in 1988,” Medieval Art historian Prof. Stefano Riccioni recalled, “Prof. Levon Zekiyan organized an important international conference on Armenian art. The following year, Prof. Adriano Alpago Novello began his course in Armenian Art and Architecture at Ca’ Foscari. In 1991, Novello transferred the Center for Study and Documentation of Armenian Culture, from Milan to Venice. And still today, this Center, under the direction of Minas Lourian, organizes several events on Armenian art, often in collaboration with Ca’ Foscari and the Biennale of Venice. Among the activities of the center are the Manukian Lectures, organized in collaboration of another important scholar who passed away recently, Prof. Gianclaudio Macchiarella.”

For the past five years, the seminars of Armenian art at Ca’ Foscari have been organized by Stefano Riccioni, Aldo Ferrari and Marco Ruffilli, in the Department of Studies on

see VENICE, page 15



ARTS & LIVING

Tekeyan Sponsors VEM Ensemble 2019 Tour to Detroit, Montreal, Boston and LA

VEM, from page 13

fate of its remaining hidden within him. Kartalyan gives the viola here an insistent pitch (D) to establish the steadfast nature of the feeling that permeates the entire poem. The pitch further ushers in the ritornello, which time and again repeats itself, first in the introduction and then between verses, to reveal the poet's ambient and intense torment. Finally, Kartalyan allows himself a liberal approach to the fourth and final lines of each verse. There he employs free and ornamental polyphonic elements to capture Tekeyan's concluding thoughts for each stanza.

The second poem pines. Tekeyan masterfully describes, in four stanzas of three lines each, the calm but ardent wish to love another soul as it were one's own private sky. The text elicits from Kartalyan a beautiful melody, very much in the tradition of Armenian folkloric music. And yet it is audaciously brave in its modulations and tonal inflections, imbued with qualities not readily imaginable in the typical monodic traditions germane to the Armenian Melos. In that way he captures the intensity of the poets wish emanating from the recesses of his soul.

The final poem in the *Triptych* is a personal accounting of the gains and losses in the poets own life. Here Tekeyan employs the sonnet form, which in Armenian traditions is a poem with two quatrains followed by two tercets. Tekeyan asks himself what has remained of balance in his life and answers immediately for himself: "only that which I have given away to others." Revisiting the loves and sympathies he has spread to others, in his final assessment he finds himself in the profound solace of having "imbibed the sun." Kartalyan's music adds a pensive privacy to the words, in which he imagines the poet reflecting alone at his balance-sheet. Each verse is treated distinctly, forged with individual musical style. Kartalyan ranges from fragmental polyphony (verse 2), to rhythmic importuning (verse 3), and finally to a confident resolution, employing a Bach-like walking bass. The opening musical idea is repeated in summary to bring this unique textual-musical arithmetic to a kind of final balance.

In addition to the *Triptych*, recognized masterworks by Gomidas upon his 150th anniversary of birth, Khachaturian, Mirzoyan, Hovhannes, and Schubert will be performed. The VEM Ensemble during its March trip will provide outreach performances at the AGBU Alex and Marie Manoogian School (Detroit), St. Stephen's Armenian Elementary School (Watertown, MA), and in Montreal.

Members of the VEM Ensemble

VEM was established in 2013 by artistic director **Prof. Movses Pogossian**. Pogossian made his American debut as a violinist with the Boston Pops in 1990, about which Richard Dyer of the *Boston Globe* wrote: "There is freedom in his playing, but also taste and discipline. It was a fiery, centered, and highly musical performance..." Prizewinner of several important competitions, including the 1986 Tchaikovsky International Competition, he extensively performed as soloist and recitalist in Europe, Northern America, and Asia. He was one of the 2016/17 Artists in Residence of the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra. He is Artistic Director of the acclaimed Dilijan Chamber Music Series, currently in its 14th season.

Champion of new music, Pogossian has premiered over 70 works. In Los Angeles, Movses Pogossian frequently performs on Monday Evening Concerts, and is a recipient of the 2011 Forte Award, given for outstanding contributions to the promotion of new music. Pogossian's discography includes the recently released "Complete Sonatas and Partitas by J. S. Bach" (New Focus Recordings), as well as solo violin CDs "Blooming Sounds" and "In Nomine," and Kurtág's "Kafka Fragments," with soprano Tony Arnold.

Since earning his advanced degrees from the Komitas Conservatory in Armenia and the Tchaikovsky Conservatory of Music in Moscow, Pogossian has held teaching positions at Duquesne, Bowling Green, Wayne State, and SUNY Buffalo Universities. Deeply committed to musical education, Pogossian is currently professor of violin at the UCLA Herb

Alpert School of Music. He proudly participates in the Music for Food project, which raises awareness of the hunger problem faced by a large percent of the populations and gives the opportunity to experience the powerful role music can play as a catalyst for change.

VEM violinist **Ji Eun Hwang** was born in Korea and has performed as a soloist and chamber musician across United States and South Korea. She began her music studies at an early age and studied in the Preparatory school of Korea National University of Art and in Seoul National University with a Bachelor's degree in violin performance. After then, she studied with an Artist Diploma in violin performance at the Jacobs School of Music, Indiana University with Prof. Mark Kaplan and Ik-Hwan Bae with a full scholarship. She attended Tanglewood Music Festival, Sarasota Music Festival, Heifetz International Music Institute, Texas Music Festival with full scholarships and Pontlevoy music festival in France. Her musical development has been furthered in masterclasses with Mihaela Martin, Patinka Kopec, Samuel Rhodes, Yael Weiss, Ani Kavafian, Pamela Frank, Mauricio Fuks, and Lucie Robert. In the past year, she has been the featured performer with many solo and chamber recitals and won several violin competitions. She played at the Yurim promising artist recital and the Young San young artist recital, and performed with the Gwangju Symphony Orchestra and City of Mokpo Symphony Orchestra. Since 2012, she has joined Sejong Soloists as a guest artist and she is a principal violinist of the Sejong City Philharmonic Orchestra. She is currently pursuing a Master of Music in violin performance at Herb Alpert School of Music, UCLA with Pogossian.

Aiko Jimena Richter is originally from Baltimore, Md. and joined VEM in 2018. She has been a fellow at major festivals including the National Orchestral Institute, Domaine Forget Academy, Festival Napa Valley, and Kent/Blossom Music Festival, during which she performed with the Cleveland Orchestra. She is also featured on the 2015 Naxos label recording of Corigliano's *Symphony No. 1* as a member of the NOI festival orchestra. As a soloist and chamber musician, she has performed in masterclasses for Gil Shaham, Noah Bendix-Balgley, Ani Kavafian, Brooklyn Rider, and the Kronos Quartet among others. She earned her B.M. at the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill as a student of Nicholas DiEugenio and is currently pursuing her M.M. at UCLA with Pogossian and Varty Manouelian.

Violist **Morgan O'Shaughnessey** has performed live on RAI Radio 3 at Palazzo Quirinale for the President of the Italian

Republic. He has presented several recitals of modern Italian works at Teatro la Fenice in Venice as a part of the festival Lo Spirito Della Musica di Venezia, as well as recorded an album of the complete chamber music of Gino Gornini in collaboration with the Giorgio Cini Foundation, which was released on the Tactus label. He performs on a fine viola by Vincenzo Cavani di Spilamberto, and a bow by Darrell Hanks of Ashland, Ore.

His extensive discography with legendary producer Sylvia Masy includes string arrangements for Johnny Depp, Rihanna, and Soilwork. He holds a BM from San Francisco Conservatory, where he studied with Jodi Levitz and members of the Kronos Quartet. His other musical interests include the Scottish highland bagpipes, Swedish nyckelharpa and Quebecois fiddle music. A passionate advocate for community involvement in music and art, O'Shaughnessey is the artistic director for Springsart Series: a non-profit community concert series that produces accomplished regional artists in interactive artistic community events in a yurt deep in the forest near Ashland, Ore.

Visit www.moshalto.com for more information on upcoming concert engagements and album releases.

Jason Pegis, named "a true talent" by Montreal's *Le Devoir*, started cello lessons at age 16 and holds a Bachelor's of Music from Willamette University where he studied with Jason Duckles and Valdine Mishkin, and a Master's of Music from McGill University where he studied with Matt Haimovitz. While working on his Bachelor's, he joined the school's Waller Piano Trio, which made news as the first chamber group from Oregon to become national finalists of the 2014 MTNA Young Artist Chamber Music Competition. He has seen much success in solo competitions as well; in 2013 and 2016 he won the Willamette University Concerto Competitions, and in 2015 winning the Eugene Symphony Young Artist Competition and Outstanding Cellist Award, after which he appeared as a soloist with the orchestra for two outdoor concerts for audiences of thousands. He also received the 2016 Zodiac Music Festival Young Artist Award, numerous instrumental scholarships from Mu Phi Epsilon, grants from the Williamson Foundation for Music, and an 1880 Neuner-Hornsteiner cello loan from the Carlsen Cello Foundation. In 2017, he became a finalist of the McGill Concerto Competition, and held a principal cello position of the McGill Symphony Orchestra. Pegis has performed chamber music with artists like Johannes Moser, Axel Strauss, Victor Fournelle-Blain, Neal Stulberg, and Denis Bouriakov. He currently studies with Antonio

Lysy in Los Angeles where he has started his Doctorate of Musical Arts and string teaching assistantship at UCLA's Herb Alpert School of Music.

Praised for possessing "extraordinary expressivity, and a beautiful voice" (*Long Beach Gazette*), **Danielle Segen** is an emerging talent in the Los Angeles music scene. Danielle earned her Master of Music degree at University of California Los Angeles, where she studied with Juliana Gondek. At UCLA she was seen regularly on the opera stage with past appearances including Prince Charming in "Cendrillon," Dorabella in "Così fan tutte," and the titular role in both "Tragedy of Carmen" and the West Coast premiere of William Bolcom's "Lucrezia."

Equally at home singing new compositions as she is performing from the standard repertoire of opera and art song, Segen has been sought after to workshop, record and perform new works. Most recently she collaborated with composer Jeff Kryka to record the theme music for "Traces of the Brush," a critically acclaimed documentary on world-renowned Chinese art historian and calligrapher Fu Shen, directed by Eros Zhao. With the VEM String Quartet Segen has enjoyed international success, performing at the Komitas Chamber Music Hall in Yerevan, Armenia as well as in the Dilijan Chamber Music Series at Zipper Hall. This upcoming year will see Danielle on concert stages across the U.S. and internationally with VEM performing Armenian art song arrangements, as well as world premieres of a new song cycle for mezzo-soprano and string quartet by Artashes Kartalyan and a new string quartet arrangement of Tigran Mansurian's *Four Hayrens*.

VEM will perform at 8 p.m. on Wednesday, March 27 cosponsored with St. John Armenian Church at its Recreational Center (22001 Northwestern Hwy., Southfield MI), with free admission and reception; 8:30 p.m. Friday, March 29 at the Tekeyan Centre, 825 Manoogian St., Saint-Laurent, Canada with reception (for tickets call 514 747-6680); 1 p.m., Sunday, March 29 cosponsored with Holy Trinity Armenian Church at 145 Brattle Street, Cambridge, Mass.; 7:30 p.m. Saturday, April 27 cosponsored by the Los Angeles chapter of the Tekeyan Cultural Association and Abril Bookstore, at the latter's site, 415 E. Broadway, Glendale, Calif. (for tickets, call 818 243-4112 or go to itsmyseat.com/abrilbooks; and 6 p.m. Sunday, May 19 hosted by the TCA Pasadena-Glendale Chapter at the TCA Beshgeturian Center (1901 N. Allen Ave., Altadena, Calif.).

For a sample performance, see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BdGXmv8Ylyc>.

**City of Smile Charitable Foundation
Boston Friends**

Join Us For An Unprecedented Evening To Benefit Children With Cancer in Armenia

Friday, April 5, 2019 • Cocktails 6:30 PM • Dinner & Program 7:30 PM
The Westin Waltham Hotel

Distinguished Guest
Anna Hakobyan
Honorary Chair, City of Smile Foundation
Spouse of Prime Minister of Armenia

RSVP
postaljian@hotmail.com 617-921-8962
manuk0102@gmail.com 781-883-4470

Advance ticket purchase required.



ARTS & LIVING

TCA Presents Literary and Musical Program in Glendale

GLENDALÉ, from page 13

will include songs by Mariam Aghajanyan with Shushana Hakobyan performing on the piano,



Melo Ekizian

and a performance by Yernayen Dagher (Heavenly Chants Flute and Harp Duo), composed of Salpy and Sossy Kerkonian.

Mariam Aghajanyan was born and raised in Yerevan, where at the age of 16 she began her music education at Arno Babajanyan Music College. After

four years there, she pursued her master's in vocal performance at the Komitas Conservatory. Shortly after she graduated, she immigrated to the United States where she continued her musical career and performed in recitals, community gatherings, churches, and



Mariam Aghajanyan

for US veterans. In June 2018, she had her big debut performance with pianist Shushana Hakobyan.

Hakobyan received her master's and doctorate degrees in music from the Komitas State Conservatory. She was one of the leading soloists of the Armenian State Philharmonic and a founding member of the SHELL Armenia State Philharmonic Trio. She has given recitals in USA, Canada, Austria, France, Italy, Lebanon, Russia, and Ukraine. Since 2014 she has collaborated with violinist and composer, Ruben Aghiyani, forming the group, Unison Duet with whom she has played numerous concerts in USA and abroad. Since 2016 the duo have done charitable concert tours in Armenia to help families in need. In 2018 they opened a violin class in the village Achajur for their program, "Keep Armenian Borders Spiritually Strong," helping talented kids in the borders of Armenia to get musical education. The proceeds from their CD, Fantasy, all go to this cause. Shushana is also a successful and inspiring piano instructor with more than 13 years of teaching experience.

Yernayin Dagher Heavenly Chants Flute and Harp Duo performed *La Boheme* for Charles Aznavour at his Hollywood Walk of Fame star ceremony, just months before his passing. Flautist Salpy Kerkonian and harpist/pianist Sossy Kerkonian are first-place winners of 22 solo competitions, including for the LA Philharmonic, Glendale Symphony and the Lucille McKinstrey Foundation, which featured Salpy Kerkonian as soloist in Chaminade's "Concertino" on PBS television. In 2018, Heavenly Chants won the Glendale Central Library Concert Series Competition.

Salpy Kerkonian graduated from the USC

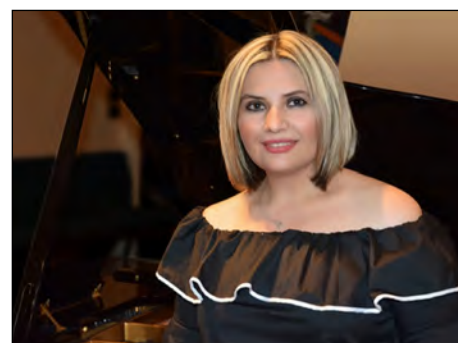
School of Music, and has performed as First Flute of the Glendale Symphony, American Youth Symphony, Debut Orchestra, Burbank Philharmonic and, Santa Cecilia Orchestra, for world renowned Conductors Mehli Mehta, Lalo Schiffrin, and Michael Tilson Thomas at the Hollywood Bowl.

Harpist/Pianist Sossy Kerkonian studied with LA Philharmonic harpist Amy Wilkins. Before arriving in Los Angeles, Sossy



Sossy, left, and Salpy Kerkonian (photo: Aram Arkun)

Kerkonian was a broadcaster at the Armenian Echoes Radio Station in NY, and performed cultural events at Town Hall and Weill Carnegie Recital Hall, accompanying Armenian vocal soloists from the Metropolitan Opera. In that



Shushana Hakobyan (photo: Aram Arkun)

capacity, she had the unique opportunity to perform live for composer Aram Khatchaturian.

The program will begin at 5 p.m. at the hall of the Glendale Public Library at 222 E. Harvard Street (validated parking at the Marketplace parking structure at Harvard and Maryland), with complimentary admission. It will conclude with a reception.

Scholars in Venice Conduct A Journey Through Armenian Art

VENICE, from page 13

Asia and Mediterranean Africa (which hosts the Chair for Armenian Language and Literature). The same three scholars organized this year's conference, which presented advanced research projects in various aspects of Armenian art, from architecture to miniatures, from khachkars to painting.

Following a lecture by Levon Chookaszian on "New Paths for the Exploration of Armenian Art," Riccioni spoke about "Armenian Art in Venice - Tradition and Research Perspectives." Attention was dedicated also to the "vishap," the famous prehistoric stones characteristic of Armenia, which have been the subject of study in the Ca' Foscari's Dragon Stones Archaeological Project. Alessandra Gilibert introduced the origins and long history of the visaps and Hamlet Petrosyan spoke on "The Repatriation Movement of Jougha/Julfa annihilated khachkars."

The conference addressed several heated issues, like the fate of the Armenian artistic heritage in hostile political environments; Francesca Penoni discussed the current state of research related to the Armenian architectonic patrimony in Turkey. And with regard to literary works, Dikran Kouymjian spoke on "The Canon Tables of the Zeiton Gospels of 1256 by T'oros Roslin at the J.P. Getty Museum; A History of Theft, Profiteering and Public Indifference."

Gohar Grigoryan presented a paper on "Method and Manuscript," followed by Rachele Zanone, who presented a historiographical and iconographic study of the miniature art of Vaspurakan.

Patrick Donabedian delivered a lecture on "Armenia-Georgia-Islam: A need to break taboos in the study of Medieval art and architecture." Marco Ruffilli discussed spoke on "The art of the Yovnat'anean - current status and research proposals." Ivan Foletti and Pavel Rakitin concluded with a discussion of Armenian art in the Soviet perception.

The new book, *Discovering the Art of Medieval Caucasus (1801-1945)*, was the subject of a roundtable discussion that completed the conference proceedings. Published in *Venezia Arti*, volume 27 (2018), the study was edited by conference participants Ivan Foletti and Stefano Riccioni.

As Riccioni pointed out, this conference is to be seen as the first in a series of international meetings on the theme of Caucasian art, which is part of an international research project, "Seminarium Caucasicum. Studies in Art on Medieval Caucasus (And Beyond)," directed by Michele Bacci (University of Fribourg), Ivan Foletti (Masaryk University) and Stefano Riccioni (Ca' Foscari University of Venice). The project promotes regional discussions dedicated to the arts of the region and the conservation and care of their artistic heritage.

Recipe Corner

by Christine Vartanian Dalian

Sautéed Spinach, Pasta and Mushrooms



INGREDIENTS

5 cups fresh spinach, washed, drained, torn into pieces
4 tablespoons olive oil (or unsalted butter)
2 cups fresh mushrooms, sliced
1/2 pound spiral, bow tie, or small shell pasta (or carrot, squash or zucchini noodles)
1 medium onion, halved, sliced thinly
1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar
1 1/2 teaspoons minced garlic
Juice and zest from one lemon
1/2 cup minced fresh parsley
1/4 cup black or Kalamata olives, sliced
Sea or Kosher salt, pepper, dried mint, basil, or oregano
Choice of crumbled feta or halloumi cheese, toasted pine nuts or walnuts, dried cranberries, fresh lemon wedges as garnish

PREPARATION

Cook the pasta in lightly salted water according to package directions. Drain and set aside.

In a large skillet or pan, sauté the onions and garlic in olive oil for a few minutes, tossing, until the onions are lightly browned. Add the mushrooms and cook until the mushrooms are tender but not mushy. Add the spinach and toss, cooking in batches until the spinach wilts. Add the balsamic vinegar, and cook a few minutes longer, stirring. (Add 1-2 tablespoons of dry white wine or chicken broth if the spinach is too dry.)

Add the pasta to the cooked spinach mixture, and toss; season with lemon juice, lemon zest, parsley, olives, salt, pepper, and choice of spices.

Top with cheese, toasted pine nuts or walnuts, or dried cranberries, and serve with fresh lemon wedges.

Serves 4.



*Christine's recipes have been published in the *Fresno Bee* newspaper, *Sunset* magazine, *Cooking Light* magazine, and at <https://www.thearmeniankitchen.com/>



ARTS & LIVING

C A L E N D A R

CALIFORNIA

MARCH 23 – Book presentation by Adrienne G. Alexanian, editor of her father’s memoir, Forced Genocide: Memoirs of an Armenian Soldier in the Ottoman Turkish Army. Saturday, 2 p.m. Calabasas Library Multipurpose Room. 200 Civic Center Way, Calabasas. Special Guest – Councilman James Bozajian RSVP blockwood@calabasaslibrary.org. Reception and book sale/signing will follow presentation – proceeds donated to the library.

MARCH 24 – Book presentation by Adrienne G. Alexanian, editor of her father’s memoir, Forced into Genocide: Memoirs of an Armenian Soldier in the Ottoman Turkish Army, Sunday, 2:30 p.m. Museum of Tolerance. Co-sponsored by the Armenian General Benevolent Union, the Armenian International Women’s Association, National Association for Armenian Studies and Research and the Armenian Assembly of America. 9786 Pico Blvd., Los Angeles. RSVP (310) 772-2505. Book sale/signing will follow presentation – proceeds will be donated

MARCH 28 – Book presentation by Adrienne G. Alexanian, editor of her father’s memoir, Forced into Genocide: Memoirs of an Armenian Soldier in the Ottoman Turkish Army, Thursday, 7 p.m., Glendale Downtown Central Library, With support from the Armenian National Committee of America. 222 East Harvard Street, Glendale. RSVP (818) 548- 2021. Book sale/signing before and after the presentation – proceeds will be donated

APRIL 4 and 7 – One of the opera world’s hottest stars, Alessandro Safina, will bring in his pop-opera to the US during his upcoming concert tour in April. He also performed for the Pope, sang duets with Andrea Bocelli, Sarah Brightman, and Rod Stewart. Safina when he performed Elton John’s “Your Song” with actor Ewan McGregor for the Oscar-nominated soundtrack of “Moulin Rouge.” Safina will be accompanied by Victor Espinola and the Forbidden Saints. The tour will also feature Armenian Duduk Soloist and Classical Clarinetist Mher Mnatsakanyan and Bassist Hova Burian will take part. Official Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/AlessandroSafinaUSA/> Official Promo Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DHHKpxTCSSY> The performance will be held at City National Civic in San Jose on Thursday, April 4. (Times 8:00-9:30pm) <https://www1.ticketmaster.com/event/1C005554CB5A7778> Dolby Theater in Los Angeles on April 7. (Times 8:00-9:30pm) https://dolbytheatre.com/events/details/alessandro_safina <https://www1.ticketmaster.com/alessandro-safina-with-victor-espinola-the-forbidden-saints/event/3B005546FA735928>

APRIL 27 – The Tekeyan Cultural Association of the United States and Canada Presents the 2019 North American tour of the VEM Ensemble of the UCLA Herb Albert School of Music, Danielle Segen, mezzo-soprano, Ji Eun Hwang, violin 1, Aiko Richter, violin 2, Morgan O’Shaughnessey, viola, Jason Pegis, cello. 7:30 p.m. Tekeyan Cultural Association Los Angeles Chapter Cosponsored with Abril Bookstore, 415 E. Broadway, Glendale. For tickets, call Abril 818 243-4112. Introductory remarks by Artistic Director Professor Movses Pogossian. Performing a world premiere of Tekeyan songs by the Los Angeles-based composer Artashes Kartalyan, commissioned by the Tekeyan Cultural Association, and masterworks by Komitas, Khachaturian, Mirzoyan, Hovhannes, and Schubert. For more information, email tcadirector@aol.com.

MAY 19 – The Tekeyan Cultural Association of the United States and Canada Presents the 2019 North American tour of the VEM Ensemble of the UCLA Herb Albert School of Music, Danielle Segen, mezzo-soprano, Ji Eun Hwang, violin 1, Aiko Richter, violin 2, Morgan O’Shaughnessey, viola, Jason Pegis, cello. 7:30 p.m. Tekeyan Cultural Association Los Angeles Chapter Cosponsored with Abril Bookstore, 415 E. Broadway, Glendale. Introductory remarks by Artistic Director Professor Movses Pogossian. Performing a world premiere of Tekeyan songs by the Los Angeles-based composer Artashes Kartalyan, commissioned by the Tekeyan Cultural Association, and masterworks by Komitas, Khachaturian, Mirzoyan, Hovhannes, and Schubert. Tekeyan Cultural Association, Pasadena-Glendale Chapter, TCA Beshgeturian Center, 1901 North Allen

Ave., Altadena. For more information, email tcadirector@aol.com.

FLORIDA

APRIL 11 – One of the opera world’s hottest stars, Alessandro Safina, will bring in his pop-opera rhythms to USA during his upcoming concert tour in April. Safina appeared with Elton John, Cher and Jennifer Lopez for Queen Elizabeth’s 73rd Royal Variety Performance. He also performed for the Pope, sang duets with Andrea Bocelli, Sarah Brightman, and Rod Stewart. Americans first became familiar with Safina when he performed Elton John’s “Your Song” with actor Ewan McGregor for the Oscar-nominated soundtrack of “Moulin Rouge.” Safina will be accompanied by Victor Espinola and the Forbidden Saints. The tour will feature Armenian Duduk Soloist and Classical Clarinetist Mher Mnatsakanyan and Bassist Hova Burian. Official Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/AlessandroSafinaUSA/> The performance will be held at Fillmore Miami Beach in Miami (Times 8:00-9:30pm)

MASSACHUSETTS

FEBRUARY 20 – MARCH 30 – The Armenian Museum is offering a six-week art program for children of all backgrounds ages 7-14. The program’s classes are Drawing and Painting, Collage, and Pottery Decoration. Students will find inspiration among the objects on display in the galleries, and study global influences on Armenian art and culture. Full information can be found at <https://www.armenianmuseum.org/events/winter-studio-classes>. Session 1, Wednesdays, 3:30–5:30 pm, February 20–March 27; Session 2, Saturdays, 1–3 pm, February 23–March 30

MARCH 2 – Sts. Vartanantz Mardi Gras Family Kef Night. What a better way to anticipate Great Lent than to dance up a storm at Sts. Vartanantz’s fabulous Mardi Gras Family Kef Night Dinner-Dance, 6 p.m., 180 Old Westford Rd., Chelmsford. Saturday. Following a sumptuous chicken-pilaf dinner, Armenian and Middle East dance music will be provided by the dynamic Jason Naroian Ensemble featuring Jason Naroian-dumbeg/vocals; Ara Jeknavorian – clarinet; Brian Anisbigian – oud; and Dave Anisbigian – guitar/vocals. Prior to the dinner-dance at 5 p.m., there will be an Armenian and Middle East line dancing workshop led by the fabulous “Hye Stepper” Diane Juknavorian where all can learn all the favorite Armenian and Greek dance steps. Paid in advance tickets must be received by February 26: Adults \$25, Students \$10, and 5 & under Free. At the door: Adults \$35 and Students \$15. For reservations, contact Maria Kazanjian (617) 240-3686 or Ria.tk@verizon.net. Tables of 8 can be reserved in advance with full payment Checks made payable to: Sts Vartanantz Armenian Church.

MARCH 2 – St. Stephen’s Armenian Elementary School (SSAES) PTO annual fundraiser Soiree. 7 p.m. at the Historic Sanborn House in Winchester. Event will feature food by anoush’ella saj kitchen, sweets by SSAES alumnus Arthur Davtian, executive pastry chef at French Press Bakery and Cafe. Open bar, Scotch and Champagne tasting stations, and a DJ to top it off. The event will feature live artist painting by Alik Arzoumanian, which will be auctioned off later in the evening. Alik is an illustrator, author, and SSAES Kindergarten Armenian teacher. Her illustrations can be viewed online www.studioalique.com. For tickets and sponsorship information e-mail: event@ssaes.org

MARCH 2 – Poon Paregentan Family Kef Night, Sts. Vartanantz Armenian Church, 180 Old Westford Rd., Chelmsford, MA. Featuring the Fabulous Jason Naroian Ensemble: Jason Naroian – Vocals and Dumbeg, Ara Jeknavorian – Clarinet, Dave Anisbigian – Guitar and Brian Anisbigian – Oud. Armenian Dance Class - 5 p.m. Dinner and Dancing at 6:00 pm. Paid in advance tickets must be received by February 26: Adults \$25, Students \$10, and 5 & under Free. At the door: Adults \$35 and Students \$15. For reservations, contact Maria Kazanjian (617) 240-3686 or Ria.tk@verizon.net. Tables of 8 can be reserved in advance with full payment Checks made payable to: Sts Vartanantz Armenian Church.

MARCH 3 – Sunday, Amaras Art Alliance presents Dolma Fest and Contest, Celebrating Poon Parekentan. Also serving traditional harissa and featuring Armenian music for dancing. Holy Cross Armenian

Catholic Church, 200 Lexington St., Belmont, 2 pm. Come and taste a variety of dolmas and vote for your favorite recipe. Two of the competing chefs will win cash prizes: \$200 first place and \$100 second place. Voting open to valid ticket holders and while supplies are available. Tickets \$25 at Amarasonline.com or by calling 617-331-0426. To register for the contest call Arax at 617-733-7162.

MARCH 4 – St. James Men’s Club Dinner Meeting - social hour and mezza at 6:15 PM and dinner at 7:00 PM, St James Armenian Church Charles Mosesian Cultural and Youth Center - Keljik Hall, 465 Mt. Auburn Street, Watertown, MA. The speaker will be Dick Flavin, poet laureate of the Boston Red Sox. He is the senior ambassador of the Boston Red Sox and voice of Fenway Park, serving as public address announcer for Red Sox day games. His television commentaries won seven New England Emmy Awards. He is a nationally known speaker and is a member of the Massachusetts Broadcasters Hall of Fame. Mezza and a Losh Kebab & Kheyma Dinner \$17/person. Ladies invited. For additional information call the St James Church office at 617-923-8860 or call Hapet Berberian at 781-367-6598

MARCH 9 – Commemoration of the February 18th Against Soviet Rule and Commemoration of the Baku/Sumgait Pogroms. Buffet Dinner and Program. Narrated Slide Presentation by Joe Dagdigian on “Unseen Armenia – Two Sides of the Border.” Rare images of Armenian Homeland on both sides of Armenia’s and Artsakh’s borders, as well as the patriotic Armenians who inhabit these lands. Jaffarian Hall, St. Gregory Armenian Church, 158 Main St., No. Andover, MA. 6:00 pm. Adults - \$15; Students - \$5. For information and reservations, please contact armenj@comcast.net or call 978-256-2538. Sponsored by the Lowell Aharonian Gomideh of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation.

MARCH 24 – Luncheon and Book Talk featuring Senator Lou D’Allesandro of New Hampshire, sponsored by Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston and the Trinity Men’s Union, 12:30 p.m., Charles and Nevart Talanian Cultural Hall, Holy Trinity Armenian Church, 145 Brattle St., Cambridge. Senator D’Allesandro will be discussing the book written about his extraordinary career in politics – Lion of the New Hampshire Senate and Thoughts for Presidential Hopefuls. Donation for lunch: \$8. Tickets on sale at the door. Books available for purchase. For further information, contact the Church Office, 617.354.0632, or log onto www.htaac.org/calendar/event/652/.

MARCH 31 – The Tekeyan Cultural Association of the United States and Canada Presents the 2019 North American tour of the VEM Ensemble of the UCLA Herb Albert School of Music, Danielle Segen, mezzo-soprano, Ji Eun Hwang, violin 1, Aiko Richter, violin 2, Morgan O’Shaughnessey, viola, Jason Pegis, cello. BOSTON Sunday, March 31, 1 p.m.cosponsored with Holy Trinity Armenian Church, 145 Brattle St., Cambridge. Free admission. Introductory remarks by Artistic Director Professor Movses Pogossian. Performing a world premiere of Tekeyan songs by the Los Angeles-based composer Artashes Kartalyan, commissioned by the Tekeyan Cultural Association, and masterworks by Komitas, Khachaturian, Mirzoyan, Hovhannes, and Schubert. For more information, email tcadirector@aol.com.

APRIL 5 – Friday, City of Smile Boston Friends will host an evening to benefit children with cancer in Armenia. Special guest Anna Hakobyan, the City of Smile Charitable Foundation’s Honorary Chair, wife of Armenia’s Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, at the Westin Waltham Hotel for her inaugural visit to Boston. The City of Smile Charitable Foundation is based in Armenia providing financial support to children with cancer. In addition, the foundation is dedicated to training doctors to provide the best cancer care in treating oncological and hematological diseases. To learn more about the City of Smile Charitable Foundation, visit www.cityofsmile.org. Tickets-\$150 each. For reservations, contact Postaljian@hotmail.com 617/921-8962 or Manuk0102@gmail.com 781/883-4470. Deadline to RSVP is March 22. Tickets will not be sold at the door. Cocktail Reception/Cash Bar - 6:30pm, Dinner and Program - 7:30 p.m.

APRIL 25 – Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston Presents The Dr. Michael and Joyce Kolligian Distinguished Speaker Series: Anthony Ray Hinton, Author of The Sun Does Shine: How I Found Life and Freedom on Death Row, “Surviving Criminal Justice in America.” Charles and Nevart Talanian Cultural Hall, 145



ARTS & LIVING

Between Two Empires

By Peter Brown

NEW YORK (New York Book) — Over the past two decades, Helen Evans, as curator of Byzantine art, has organized a series of stunning exhibitions at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. They have revealed rich worlds unlike our own, yet bound to us by a family resemblance, as a result of a common origin in the Mediterranean societies of Late Antiquity. In these exhibitions Evans has presented the great alternative to the Catholic West: the Christian Orthodox world of Byzantium, the Balkans, and Russia. She has also reinterpreted the emergence of Islam, for the first time in a major exhibition, not as a brutal break in the flow of Middle Eastern history but as a moment of transition. In her latest exhibition, “Armenia!,” she has outdone herself. Here is the story of an Eastern Christian society that was creative, enduring, and, at many times, gloriously idiosyncratic.

The exhibition is based on a hitherto

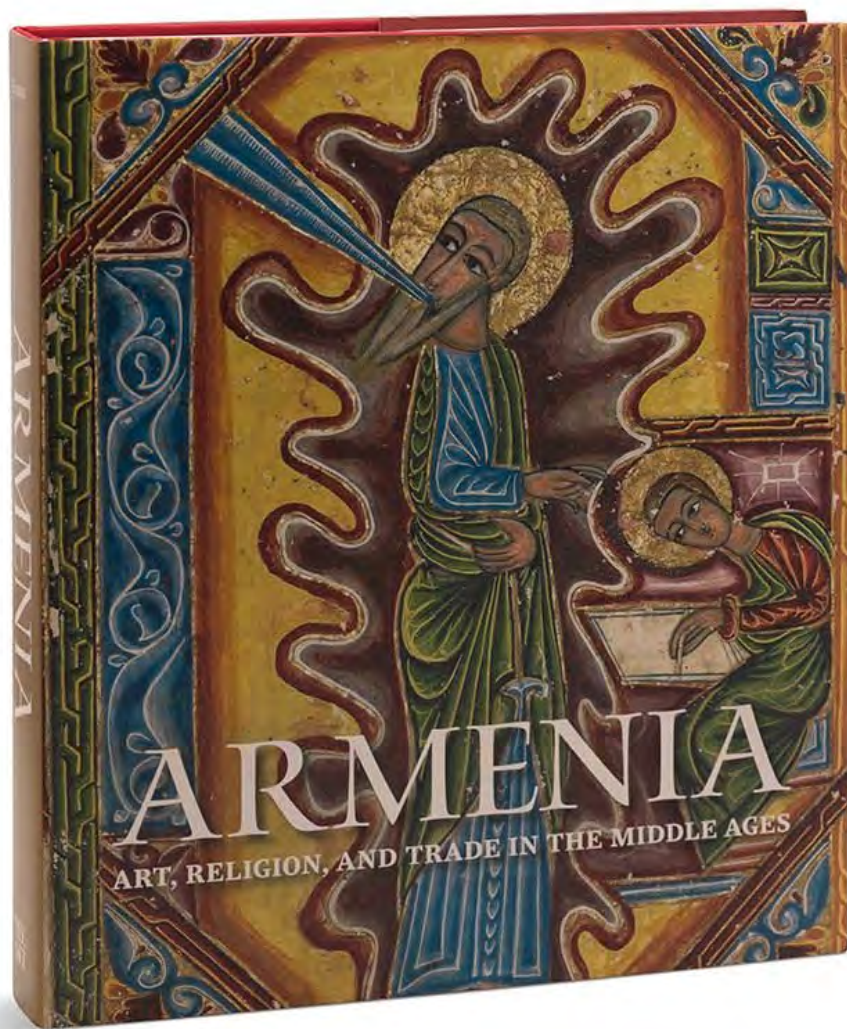
undreamed-of gathering of Armenian objects of high quality. The exquisitely illuminated pages of complete books — each volume heavy with a distinctive past — line well-lit walls. But less expected are the enormous decorative crosses carved in stone, known in Armenian as khachkars, that once sprouted like so many ranks of giants in the cemeteries and shrines of the Armenian uplands. Here the cross has become, in an Eastern Christian tradition whose roots lay deep in the imaginative world of the ancient Near East, a tree of life. The khachkar would have shimmered as light and shadow played on its lace-like surface, making the deep-carved stone appear as opulent as the woodwork and stucco of great palaces. Each one spoke of a person or a group whose memory, it was hoped, would last as long as the stone stood in its native earth.

The vibrant khachkars hit the eye in the exhibition’s rooms as the manuscripts do not. But they were both produced for the same reason. Behind each lies a heroic determination not to forget. Each manuscript volume carries a colophon — a final comment added by the scribe — that begs the reader to remember him (or her, for we know of at least one woman scribe) as well as the patron and family who had commissioned the book — usually a gospel or a hymnal. Like the khachkars, the manuscripts come from a society in which memory was not simply (as it often is with us) an attic of the mind — a neutral storage space of past events. Memory was loyalty, and forgetfulness was treason.

As we walk through the exhibition, somewhat bemused by the sheer beauty of bright color set on radiant gold leaf, we should remember the world revealed to us...

NEW York Books.com

BOOKS



Armenia!, an exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City, September 22, 2018–January 13, 2019

Armenia: Art, Religion, and Trade in the Middle Ages

Catalog of the exhibition edited by Helen C. Evans

Metropolitan Museum of Art, 351 pp., \$65.00 (distributed by Yale University Press)

C A L E N D A R

Brattle Street, Cambridge MA 02138. Reception and book signing to follow talk. Open and free to the public. For further information, contact the Holy Trinity Church office, 617.354.0632, email office@htaac.org, or log onto www.htaac.org/calendar/event/622/.

APRIL 27 – SAVE THE DATE! Hai Guin Scholarship Association 2019 Spring Benefit Luncheon. Belmont Country Club. Saturday, 11:30 a.m. Sip, Shop and Support! Featuring Fashions and Pop-Up Shop by St. John. Please contact Christine Berberian 978-500-1116 or Andrea Garabedian 978-618-3030 to reserve your tickets (\$65 each).

MAY 3 – 117th Diocesan Assembly Gala Banquet – V. Rev. Fr. Daniel Findikyan, Primate, presiding. Boston Marriott Burlington. Hosted by St. James Armenian Church in Watertown. Save the Date – Details to Follow.

JUNE 28 – July 10 – St. James Armenian Church 7th Pilgrimage to Armenia. Led by Fr. Arakel Aljalian. Join us and Discover the Land of our Ancestors. All are welcome. Registration deposits due March 1; Full Payment due April 1. For full details visit www.stjameswatertown.org/armenia.

SEPTEMBER 18 – SAVE THE DATE! InterContinental Hotel, Boston. Extraordinary Benefit for Armenian Heritage Park’s Endowed Fund for Care.

OCTOBER 19 – The Vosbikians are coming to the Merrimack Valley. The Armenian Friends of America proudly present their Annual HYE KEF 5 Dance, featuring The Vosbikians. The DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel, Andover, MA. Tickets Purchased before 9/13/19 will include the Great Venue, Outstanding Buffet, The Vosbikian Band and 5 Free Raffle Tickets Adults \$75.00 & Students 21 & under \$65 Specially priced AFA Rooms available through 9/17/19. For Tickets and more information, Contact: Lu Sirmaian 978-683-9121 or Sharke’ Der Apkarian at 978-808-0598 Visit www.ArmeniaFriendsofAmerica.org

NOVEMBER 16 – St. Stephen’s Armenian Elementary School 35th Anniversary Celebration. 6:30 PM Cocktail Reception, 7:30 PM Dinner and Program. The Westin Waltham - Boston, MA \$150 per person.

MICHIGAN

MARCH 27 – The Tekeyan Cultural Association of the

United States and Canada Presents the 2019 North American tour of the VEM Ensemble of the UCLA Herb Albert School of Music, Danielle Segen, mezzo-soprano, Ji Eun Hwang, violin 1, Aiko Richter, violin 2, Morgan O’Shaughnessey, viola, Jason Pegis, cello. Wednesday, March 27, 8 p.m. Cosponsored with Music Guild of St. John Armenian Church Recreation Center, 22001 Northwestern Hwy, Southfield. Free admission. Introductory remarks by Artistic Director Professor Movses Pogossian. Performing a world premiere of Tekeyan songs by the Los Angeles-based composer Artashes Kartalyan, commissioned by the Tekeyan Cultural Association, and masterworks by Komitas, Khachaturian, Mirzoyan, Hovhannes, and Schubert. For more information, email tcadirector@aol.com.

NEW JERSEY

MAY 18 – St. Nersess Armenian Seminary invites you to Hope & Gratitude, a celebration honoring Archbishop Khajag Barsamian and Bishop-elect Very Rev. Daniel Findikyan. 6:30 p.m. Old Tappan Manor, Old Tappan, NJ. For more info on reservations and booklet sponsorships, please go to www.stnersess.edu.

OCTOBER 25 – Honoring Dr. Taner Akçam. Abajian Hall St. Leon Armenian Complex, Fair Lawn. Sponsored by Knights and Daughters of Vartan, Under the Auspices of Primate Very Rev. Fr. Daniel Findikyan.

NEW YORK

APRIL 9 – One of the opera world’s hottest stars, Alessandro Safina, will bring in his pop-opera rhythms to the US. Safina will be accompanied by Victor Espinola and the Forbidden Saints. The tour will also feature Armenian Duduk Soloist and Classical Clarinetist Mher Mnatsakanyan and Bassist Hova Burian will take part. Official FaceBook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/AlessandroSafinaUSA/> Official Promo Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DHHKpxTCSSY> The performance will be held at Beacon Theater in New York. (Times 8:00-9:30pm) <https://www1.ticketmaster.com/alessandro-safina-with-victor-espinola-the-forbidden-saints/event/3B005546FA735928>

APRIL 28- Sunday at 1:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. Armenian

Genocide Commemoration at Times Square, NYC Sponsored by : Knight & Daughters of Vartan, AGBU, ADL-Ramgavars. Armenian Assembly of America, ANCA and Armenian National Council

OHIO

APRIL 28 – Book presentation by Adrienne G. Alexanian, editor of her father’s memoir, Forced into Genocide: Memoirs of an Armenian Soldier in the Ottoman Turkish Army, Sunday 2 p.m. Maltz Museum of Jewish Heritage. In co-sponsorship with St. Gregory of Narek Church and Armenian Cultural Group, 2929 Richmond Road Beachwood, Ohio 74122 RSVP info@mmjh.org or (216) 593-0575. Book sale/signing during reception following the presentation – proceeds will be donated

TEXAS

APRIL 4 – Book presentation by Adrienne G. Alexanian, editor of her father’s memoir Forced into Genocide: Memoirs of an Armenian Soldier in the Ottoman Turkish Army. Thursday, 6:30 p.m. Holocaust Museum Houston. Co-sponsored by Armenian Church of St. Kevork, 9220 Kirby Drive (Suite 100), Houston, Texas. RSVP (713) 527-1604. Book sale/signing will follow presentation – proceeds will be donated

CANADA

MARCH 29 – Tekeyan Cultural Association of the US and Canada Presents the 2019 North American tour of the VEM Ensemble of the UCLA Herb Albert School of Music, Danielle Segen, mezzo-soprano, Ji Eun Hwang, violin 1, Aiko Richter, violin 2, Morgan O’Shaughnessey, viola, Jason Pegis, cello. Wednesday, March 27, 8 p.m. Cosponsored with Music Guild of St. John Armenian Church Recreation Center, 22001 Northwestern Hwy, Southfield. Free admission. Introductory remarks by Artistic Director Professor Movses Pogossian. Performing a world premiere of Tekeyan songs by the Los Angeles-based composer Artashes Kartalyan. Friday, Tekeyan Center, 825 Manoogian St., St. Laurent, Canada. For tickets call 514-747-6680. For more information, email tcadirector@aol.com.

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EDITOR
Alin K. Gregorian

ASSISTANT EDITOR
Aram Arkun

ART DIRECTOR
Marc Mgrditchian

SENIOR EDITORIAL COLUMNIST:
Edmond Y. Azadian

CONTRIBUTORS:
Florence Avakian, Dr. Haroutiun Arzoumanian, Philippe Raffi Kalfayan, Philip Ketchian, Kevork Keushkerian, Harut Sassounian, Hagop Vartivarian, Naomi Zeytoonian

CORRESPONDENTS:
Armenia - Hagop Avedikian
Boston - Nancy Kalajian
Los Angeles - Taleen Babayan
Berlin - Muriel Mirak-Weissbach

Contributing Photographers:
Jirair Hovsepian

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FAX: 617-924-2887

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E-Mail: editor@mirrorspectator.com

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Baikar Association, Inc.

755 Mt. Auburn St., Watertown, MA 02472-1509

COMMENTARY

Turkey's Hate Crimes Are only the Tip of the Iceberg

By Edmond Y. Azadian

Recently two outrageous events took place almost simultaneously but the reactions of the international community stood in stark contrast.

In the first instance, a Jewish cemetery in France was desecrated with Nazi graffiti. President Emmanuel Macron of France rushed to the site to deplore the vandalism and the next day the streets of Paris and other cities were filled with huge numbers of crowds demonstrating against anti-Semitism.

Indeed, anti-Semitism is rising in France and in certain Eastern European countries, fueling fears of intolerance which had plagued Europe for so many years and especially after the coming to power of the Nazi party in Germany.

The next incident is the continued acts of vandalism against Armenians in Turkey, which does not grab headlines internationally.

The alarm raised during the French incident was justified, while the indifference toward the plight of other minorities is very hard to explain or justify. Incidentally, germane to this issue is a law passed by the French legislature called Loi Gaysot, which makes the denial of the Jewish Holocaust punishable by law, while a similar law that would have extended the same punitive measure to the denial of the Armenian Genocide, was struck down by France's Constitutional Court in 2012, arguing that it curbs freedom of speech.

This kind of double standard will play into the hands of demagogues and racists who can insult and persecute certain minorities, including Armenians.

Vandals in Turkey have targeted not only Armenian cemeteries but operating Armenian Churches in Istanbul to express their hatred towards them. Just this week, the Surp Hreshdagabed Armenian Church in Istanbul's Balat District was painted by graffiti, warning "You are finish" (sic).

Only the previous week, Surp Astvatzadzin Church in Istanbul's Zeinlink district had been vandalized while in 2018, another Armenian Church, Surp Takavor, was also sprayed with words of hate graffiti that "This homeland is ours." In 2016, the Bomonti Mkhitarian Armenian School suffered the same fate. And a few years ago, the Armenian Patriarchate at Kumkapi was the target of a bomb threat.

The Armenian community has to suffer from all these indignities and trauma because of the state policy towards minorities. That state-sponsored policy of hate also led to the assassination of journalist Hrant Dink in 2007.

When the Turks proclaim that "this homeland is ours," they intrinsically let on that they have doubts about this homeland being theirs. It is not racist to characterize many Turkish or Ottoman leaders as usurpers and destroyers of civilizations; it is only a social postulation based on evidence. They have occupied Asia Minor, destroyed Greek and Armenian civilizations, committed genocides and now believe it is time to dictate "You are finish."

If President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's Turkey was a person, we would characterize "this homeland is ours" as a Freudian slip.

When a member of the Turkish Parliament, Garo Paylan, raises his voice in protest against hate messages, rather than praising or supporting him, the administration threatens to strip him of his parliamentary immunity and put him behind bars. Indeed, Paylan has courageously stated: "A hate crime has been committed against the Balat Surp Hreshdagabed Armenian Church. Hate crimes against Armenian churches and synagogues take place several times every year. Not only the perpetrators by the powers behind [the attacks] should be addressed, but above all, hate-generating policies should be ended."

These crimes could not be regarded as the unintended consequences of a policy since that policy is inciting hatred towards Turkey's minorities. Right at this moment, Erdogan's administration is waging a war against a quarter of the country's population, the Kurds. And Hrant Dink was also a victim of that policy, after being harassed in trials on trumped up charges for years.

It is the manifestation of the same policy when government officials turn their ire against Armenian migrant workers. This time around, it is a right-wing party aligned with Erdogan's AK Party, which is advocating the expulsion of migrant workers, who are thought to number between 10,000 and 30,000. But Mustafa

Destici, the head of the Great Union Party, has asked the government to take action against those immigrants, stating, "There are 100,000 Armenians here who came from Armenia and are illegally filling their stomachs. I am saying that we should expel them. Why are we letting them stay?"

First of all, the number is exaggerated and second, for a very practical reason — the language barrier — they are mostly employed by local Armenians. Never mind that the Turks have destroyed an entire historic Armenia and have filled their stomachs with the looting of what millions of Armenians left behind.

This threat does not only come from the extreme right-wing. Before him, Prime Ministers Turgut Ozal and Tansu Çiller also made similar threats while Mr. Erdogan has made oblique references to them by stating that the Turkish state is such a charitable institution that it does not take punitive actions against the "transgressions" of the Armenians.

Mustafa Destici has been trying to take his revenge on those migrant workers, because he cannot stand up to French President Macron, who recently announced that April 24 will officially mark Armenian Martyrs' Day in France. The Turkish government has been exercising a policy of cat-and-mouse with its minorities to dupe the European Union. A case in point is the recent return of Sanasarian Han, a huge piece of real estate, which had been confiscated from the Armenian community and after a show trial, was returned it to the Armenians, only to be confiscated again.

The Turkish leaders view Europeans as naïve statesmen who cannot detect their chicanery. But lo and behold, the European Union suspended the negotiating process with Turkey.

The Turks and Azeris have deep-seated anxieties with regard to the harsh judgement of history since they have occupied the territories of indigenous people and one day may face a reckoning.

Hence, the Sevres Syndrome remains alive.

That is why they are in a race against time to destroy all the vestiges of Armenian presence and civilization on those lands, meantime fabricating a historic narrative that for centuries Seljuk Turks were inhabiting the Anatolian plateau and that Christian Albanians have inhabited Karabakh and Nakhichevan, all ancestors of Turks and Azeris.

Before World War I, there were 2,538 churches and 451 monasteries within the borders of modern Turkey. They have all been either destroyed or repurposed as stables, museums, storage areas or movie theaters. Laure Marchange and Guillaume Perrier explain in their book, *Turkey and the Armenian Ghost*, "Since the Armenians' religious heritage was the strongest expression of their ancestral roots, it became a prime target of their oppressors. In

absolute numbers, Turkey's wipeout of Armenian cultural heritage dwarfs Azerbaijan's recent vandalism in Nakhijevan."

One Armenian scholar, Argam Ayvazyan, singlehandedly has documented almost all the architectural monuments in Karabakh and Nakhichevan and has published 200 articles and 40 books on the subject.

To this day, none of the successive administrations in Armenia have given proper recognition and support to him and his cause. It is time to divulge a little secret here. Way before the collapse of the Soviet Union, Ayvazyan reached out to me at the Manoogian Cultural Fund, declaring that momentous events are predicted in the Caucasus. Therefore, he said, it is time to document monuments in Karabakh and Nakhichevan. After obtaining initial funding, he hired a foreign photographer to capture all the monuments. Even during the Soviet period, Armenians were banned from traveling to Nakhichevan and the Azeris had managed to expel the remnants of the Armenian population from that exclave.

In Nakhichevan, Ayvazyan was able to document 89 Armenian churches, 5,840 ornate khachkars and 22,000 horizontal tombstones. All the khachkars were destroyed by the Azerbaijani government in 2005. All protests to UNESCO proved futile. Later on, it was discovered that when the US cut its support to UNESCO, the Azerbaijani government donated a grant of \$5 million and was soon after recognized by UNESCO as a "country of tolerance."

What a farce.

The ghost of martyred Armenians will haunt the Turks and Azeris forever and their only protection from history's judgement will force the race toward the destruction of Armenian monuments.

Today's hate crimes in Turkey are only the tip of the iceberg. The rest lies below the surface, under the ocean of history.





COMMENTARY



My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

Azerbaijan's Destruction of Armenian Monuments Exceeds ISIS Crimes

"A groundbreaking forensic report tracks Azerbaijan's destruction of 89 medieval churches, 5,480 intricate cross-stones, and 22,700 tombstones," is the subtitle of an incredible article by Simon Maghakyan and Sarah Pickman, published in the Hyperallergic Newsletter last week. The article is titled: "A Regime Conceals its Erasure of Indigenous Armenian Culture."

In April 2011, when the US Ambassador to Azerbaijan wanted to visit Nakhichevan, an Armenian territory classified by the Soviets as an "autonomous republic" of Azerbaijan, to verify the destruction of thousands of historical medieval Armenian khachkars (cross-stones), he was blocked by Azeri officials who told him that reports of their destruction was fake news.

Under Azeri oppression, the longstanding Armenian community of Nakhichevan had dwindled to zero! Not content with ethnic-cleansing, the Azeris proceeded to eliminate all traces of Armenian monuments, claiming that no Armenians had ever lived in Nakhichevan.

"In December 2005, an Iranian border patrol alerted the Prelate of Northern Iran's Armenian Church that the vast Djulfra cemetery, visible across the border in Azerbaijan, was under military attack. Bishop Nshan Topouzian and his driver rushed to videotape over 100 Azerbaijani soldiers, armed with sledgehammers, dump trucks and cranes destroying the cemetery's remaining 2,000 khachkars; over 1,000 had

already been purged in 1998 and 2002," reported Maghakyan and Pickman.

The flattened land, where the khachkars stood for centuries, is now a military rifle range. The "demolition was the 'grand finale' of Azerbaijan's eradication of Nakhichevan's Armenian past," wrote the two authors.

Maghakyan and Pickman reported that "the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) employed remote sensing technologies in its pioneer investigation into cultural destruction. Their 2010 geospatial study concluded that 'satellite evidence is consistent with reports by observers on the ground who have reported the destruction of Armenian artifacts in the Djulfra cemetery.'"

"Absolutely false and slanderous information ... [fabricated by] the Armenian lobby," proclaimed Azerbaijan's President Ilham Aliyev, who makes frequent threats against Armenia and distorts its history.

The authors also quote from public decree No.5-03/S on December 6, 2005, by Nakhichevan's "local autocrat" Vasif Talibov, a relative of President Aliyev, "ordering a detailed inventory of Nakhichevan's monuments. Three years later, the investigation was summed up in the bilingual English and Azerbaijani 'Encyclopedia of Nakhchivan Monuments,' co-edited by Talibov himself. Missing from the 522-page 'Encyclopedia' are the 89 medieval churches, 5,840 intricate khachkars, and 22,000 tombstones that [Armenian researcher Argam] Ayvazyan had meticulously documented. There is not so much as a footnote on the now-defunct Christian Armenian communities in the area – Apostolic and Catholic alike. Nevertheless, the official Azerbaijani publication's foreword explicitly reveals 'Armenians' as the reason for No. 5-03/S: 'Thereafter the decision issued on 6 December 2005 ... a passport was issued for each monument ... Armenians demonstrating hostility against us not only have an injustice [sic] land claim from Nakhchivan, but also our historical monuments by giving biased [sic] information to the international community. The held investigations once again prove that the land of Nakhchivan belonged to the Azerbaijan Turks [sic]....'"

Any Azerbaijani who dares to speak out in defense of Armenians is also attacked as an enemy of Azerbaijan. A courageous Azerbaijani writer, Akram Aylisli, paid a hefty

price for telling the truth about the destruction of Armenian monuments in his hometown of Agulis (known today as Aylis). The well-known novelist was furious that the Azeri government was destroying Armenian churches. In his novel, "Stone Dreams," the protagonist, an intellectual from Agulis, refers to memories of the town's eight of the 12 medieval churches that had survived until the 1990's, and protects a victim of anti-Armenian pogroms in Azerbaijan's capital Baku. President Aliyev revoked Aylisli's pension and title of "People's Writer." His writings were removed from school curricula, his books were publicly burned, and his family members were fired from their jobs. He has been under de facto house arrest since the release of his novel. Aylisli protested the destruction of the Armenian churches in Agulis and resigned from his position as Member of Azerbaijan's Parliament. He fearlessly sent a telegram to President Heydar Aliyev in 1997, calling the destruction of the Armenian churches in Aylis an "act of vandalism being perpetrated through the involvement of armed forces and employment of anti-tank mines."

The two authors spoke with Russian journalist Shura Burtin who after interviewing Aylisli in 2013 traveled to Nakhichevan and reported that he didn't see "a trace of the area's glorious past." Burtin concluded: "Not even ISIS could commit such an epic crime against humanity."

The authors reported that Aylisli's 2018 non-fiction essay in Farewell, claimed "that a mosque built five years ago on the site of one of the destroyed churches has been boycotted by locals because 'everyone in Aylis knows that prayers offered in a mosque built in the place of a church don't reach the ears of Allah.'"

Argam Ayvazyan, a native of Nakhichevan who spent decades photographing the local Armenian monuments before their destruction, was quoted by Maghakyan and Pickman as decrying the world's silence: "Oil-rich Azerbaijan's annihilation of Nakhichevan's Armenian past make it worse than ISIS, yet UNESCO and most Westerners have looked away." ISIS-demolished sites like Palmyra can be renovated, Ayvazyan argued, but "all that remain of Nakhichevan's Armenian churches and cross-stones that survived earthquakes, caliphs, Tamerlane, and Stalin are my photographs."

New History of Christian Genocide during Ottoman Empire Sounds Dark Warning for Future

Israeli historian Benny Morris doesn't do things by half. The footnotes of his new book on the 30-year genocide of Christians by their Turkish rulers, cowritten with his colleague Dror Zeevi, take up more than a fifth of the 640-page work. "It was nine years, a long haul," he admitted to me this week, with an audible sigh over the phone. And he talks about the involvement of Ataturk in the later stages of the genocide of around 2.5 million Christians of the Ottoman empire; how "religions do drive people to excessive violence" – he has in mind the Turks, Isis, the Crusades – and even condemns the Arabs for their inability to criticise themselves.

The mere title of the Morris-Zeevi book, *The Thirty-Year Genocide: Turkey's Destruction of Its Christian Minorities 1894-1924* (to be published by Harvard University Press in

April) is going to have the Turks enraged, from Erdogan down. The Armenians and other Christians will dispute his apparent claim that he has

By Robert Fisk

only just discovered that their slaughter lasted for 30 years – others have talked of the Armenian genocide of 1915 book-ended by the late 19th-century massacres in Turkey and the post-1915 killing of surviving Armenians and Greeks, Assyrians and others. And the Arab world will challenge his view that the holocaust (my word) of Christians was more motivated by Islam than Turkish nationalism.

Having written about the genocide of the Armenians for 35 years, I have doubts that the actual call for "jihad" in the Turkish Ottoman empire unleashed at the start of the First World War was as ferocious as Morris makes it out to be. Muftis were indeed told they were in a holy war against Christians – but not against German Christians, Austro-Hungarian Christians, neutral Christians or allies of the Central Powers (Bulgaria, for example). Many Muslim worshippers, sitting on the carpets of mosque floors, must have shaken their heads in puzzlement at these caveats. Well, one way was to notice the German officers training the Ottoman army, the German diplomats and businessmen who witnessed the genocide of the Armenians with their own eyes, and wrote home about it. Hitler asked his generals who now remembered the Armenians just before invading Poland in 1939.

But again and again, I was brought up short by the sheer, terrible, shocking accounts of violence in Morris's and Zeevi's work. "Strident religiosity" moved through the Muslim lands, wrote the authors.

The date: 1895. The place: Severek. The witness: Armenian survivor Abraham Hartunian. "The first attack was on our pastor [Mardiros Bozyakalian]. The blow of an axe decapitated him. His blood, spurting in all directions, splattered the walls and ceiling with red. Then I was in the midst of the butchers. One of them drew his dagger ... Three blows fell on my head. My blood

began to flow like a fountain ... The attackers [were] sure that I was dead ... Then they slaughtered the other men in the room, took the prettier women with them for rape ..."

Now it is July 1915. The place: Merzifon. The witness: missionary JK Marsden. "They were in groups of four with their arms tied behind them and their deportation began with perhaps 100 ... in a batch ... they were taken about 12 miles across the plains, stripped of their clothing and, in front of a ditch previously prepared, were compelled to kneel down while a group of villagers with knives and axes quickly disposed of them. For a week, this was repeated until 1,230 of the leading Armenian men had been disposed of."

In January 1920, YMCA secretary CFH Crathern was in Marash. The wife of an Armenian pastor had reached his hospital. "She was bleeding ... from three bullet and three dagger or knife wounds while a child of 18 months had been taken from her breast and slain with a knife, and an older girl killed with an axe. To add to the sorrow of it, this woman was pregnant and had a miscarriage as soon as she reached the hospital." The woman died the following day.

I have repeated above only a few of the less bloody episodes from the 30 years. I will spare readers the chopped off fingers, the thousands of raped girls, the priests beheaded or burned on crucifixes.

In the final annihilation of the Armenians, an American missionary spoke of "minds obsessed with Muslim fanaticism seven times heated." Turks, he wrote, had "become drunk with blood and rapine, and plunder and power, and he will be a different man from what he was before the atrocities." Benny Morris thinks it was more to do with a mixture of modern nationalism and the decline of "Islamic polity."

I discussed all this with him. Is it possible for a people to be so inured to cruelty that they changed, that their acts of sadism could alter their humanity? Religions drive people to excessive violence, he said again, and then repeated this as "excessive sadism." Morris agreed that the Romans were cruel, but they were pagans. "In terms of religion, the Romans were amateurs. Abrahamic religions drive people to excess." Jews had avoided this. Palestinians will disagree.

There is certainly a frightening geographical scope to the killings. Many thousands of horrors were perpetrated in Mosul, Raqqa, Manbij and Deir ez-Zor, names grimly familiar from the Isis torments of 2014 onwards.

Why, one keeps asking, didn't the Christians leave after 1924? But of course, they had been urged to return to settle in Cilicia and in Mesopotamia and Syria by the French and British – who left; and thus the Christian descendants waited for the next generational bloodletting.

The Turks were not the only killers, and Kurds also killed the Christians for the Turks, as Ukrainians killed the Jews for the Nazi Germans. At one point in Morris's text, a group of Circassians plait a rope 25 yards long from the hair of young

women they have killed, and send it as a present to their commander.

Mustafa Kemal Ataturk gets pretty well trashed in this volume. "There are accounts of him saying in 1922 that, 'Our aim is to get rid of the Christians' – he said this in a number of conversations," Morris contends. "He gave orders, and men in his later government were responsible." But if this 30-year history of blood was fueled by "Muslim fanaticism", there are "good Turks" in the book. In the first massacres, government officials arrested Essad Bey, an "honest, impartial and tolerant" judge who tried to help the Christians. There is a heroic Turkish doctor who throws out his sick Turkish soldiers from a hospital and replaces them with Armenian refugees. Missionary Tacy Atkinson hoped to meet the doctor one day "in the Kingdom of Heaven." There are others. It's true that the Greek Christians have fewer historians than the Armenians. Tens of thousands of Greeks were transported to Greece in return for an equal number of Muslims – official agreements kept the massacres a trifle smaller – but Morris and Zeevi give too little attention to the awe in which the Nazis held Ataturk's people.

Ataturk himself cared little for Islam: he smoked and womanised, and was a nationalist before he was a Muslim. The Nazis admired his "Turkified" non-minority republic. When he died, the front page of *Völkischer Beobachter* was fringed in black.

Watch more

The authors briefly compare the Jewish Holocaust and the Armenian genocide – I prefer the terms Jewish Holocaust and Armenian Holocaust – and there are some already published parallels. Armenians might be spared if they would convert to Islam or marry Muslim men. Jews could not save their lives by converting. The Turkish massacres were more sadistic. I rather think the German-inspired slaughter could be just as bad in the Second World War: witness the head-chopping at the Jasenovac camp on the Croatian-Bosnian border. Persecution of the Jews under the Nazis lasted at most 12 years, but persecution of Christians in Ottoman territories 30 years.

German civilians played little role in the Jewish Holocaust. Turkish civilians played a far greater role. If 2.5 million Christians is the correct figure for those murdered in the 30 years – Morris warned me that it cannot be accurately tallied, and I'm sure he's right – at least six million Jews were killed in the 1939-1945 period, and so it took the Nazis five times as few years to slaughter more than twice as many human beings. The Turks simply didn't have the industrial tools to kill more Christians more quickly, because these mechanics were unavailable at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries. But working on this basis, how many people will be killed in the future – and how quickly – with new technology?

(Robert Fisk is the Middle East correspondent for the *Independent* newspaper. This column appeared in the February 21 edition of the publication.)



Symposium and Concert Celebrating Tigran Mansurian

MANSURIAN, from page 1

develop the individual approaches that characterize their mature work. Mansurian's complex evolutionary path thus becomes the subject of two round table discussions by musicologists, exploring first the vertical dimension of his affinities with the musical trajectory of his homeland, while at the same time situating his compositions horizontally within the broad spectrum of musical exchange between East and West in the modern and contemporary world. Presenters comprise Artur Avanesov (American University of Armenia, Yerevan), Elena Dubinets (artistic administrator of the Seattle Symphony), Lisa Cooper Vest (University of Southern California), Vatche Barsoumian (director of the Lark Musical Society, Glendale), together with A. J. Racy (UCLA) and Ian Krouse (UCLA) in a conversation moderated by S. Peter Cowe (UCLA).

The gala concert to follow opens with a pretaped message of congratulations by the president of the Armenian Republic and welcoming remarks by the Armenian consul general in Los Angeles. The program embraces several of Mansurian's masterpieces, including the US premiere of his acclaimed String Quintet, intercalated with compositions by his close friends Pärt, Schnittke and Silvestrov. Featured guest artists include principal clarinetist of the Los Angeles Philharmonic and UCLA faculty Boris Allakhverdyan, Artur Avanesov (piano), the VEM String Quartet, Danielle Segen (mezzo-soprano), Antonio Lysy (cello), Varty Manouelian (violin), Movses Pogossian (violin), Miroslava Khomik (violin), Tiffany Wee (violin), James Lent (piano), Michael Kaufman (cello), James Bass, and the Seraphic Fire/UCLA Ensemble Artists.

The symposium will take place in the Popper Theater, 2:53:30 p.m., while the concert will be held in the adjacent Schoenberg Concert Hall, beginning at 8 p.m. The program is free and open to the public. Refreshments will be served. Self-service parking is available at UCLA's Parking Structure #2.

Tumanyan's Bronze Statue Unveiled in His Tbilisi House

TBILISI (Panorama.am) – A bronze statue of Armenian poet and publicist Hovhannes Tumanyan was installed on Tuesday, February 19, on the balcony of Tumanyan scientific and cultural center in Tbilisi.

The gift was made by a Georgian MP Dato Chichinadze on the occasion of the 150th birthday anniversary of the great Armenian poet.

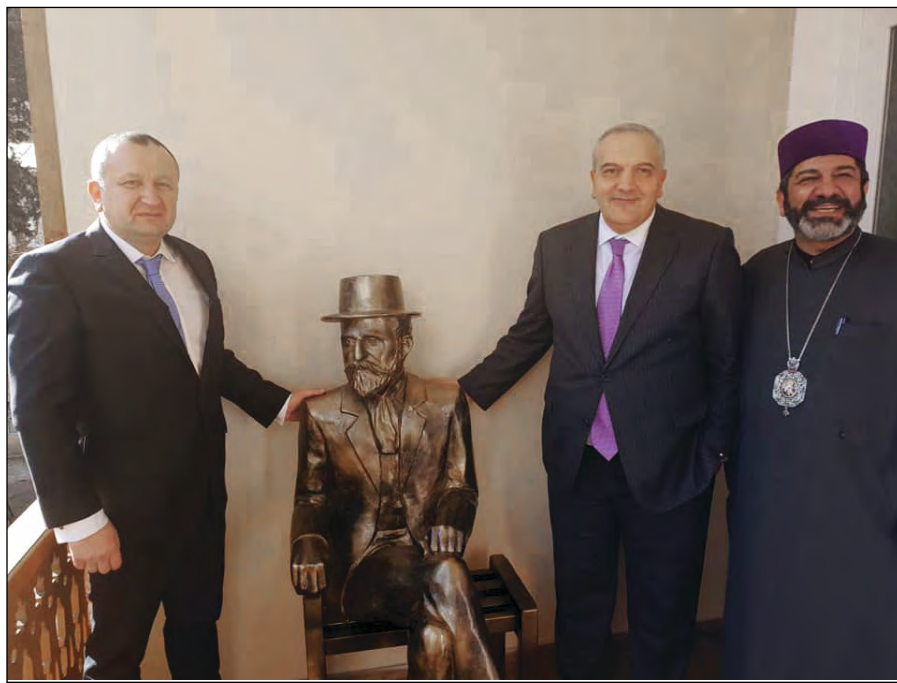
The cultural center named after Hovhanness Tumanyan is located on Amagleba street, 18 (former Davitashvili St.) in Tbilisi.

Tumanyan lived in the house from 1904 to 1923. In 1952 the writer's personal belongings were taken to Yerevan and four rooms out of six were turned into a library. The rest belonged to his heirs. After Georgia's independence, the City Hall of Tbilisi has transferred the ownership of the part of the library to a Georgian citizen.

In a critical condition, that part later had was acquired again at the initiative of Levon Ananyan, the former chairman of the Writers' Union of Armenia thanks to the financial support provided by then Mayor of Gyumri, Vardan Ghukasyan. After



The new statue of Hovhanness Tumanyan



At the ceremony unveiling the statue

the acquisition of the building by the Diocese, Jinishian Memorial and IDEA Foundation along with the Armenian Church initiated the full renovation and furnishing of the building.

Tumanyan is usually regarded in Armenian circles as "All-Armenian poet". Tumanyan wrote poems, quatrains, ballads, novels, fables, critical and journalistic articles. His work is simple, natural and poetically inspired at the same time. It is not by mere chance that dozens of phrases and expressions from Tumanyan's works have become a natural part of people's everyday language, their sayings, adages, and maxims.



The Tekeyan Cultural Association of the United States and Canada
Presents the 2019 North American tour of the

VEM Ensemble of the UCLA Herb Alpert School of Music

Performing a World Premiere of Tekeyan songs by the Los Angeles-based composer Artashes Kartalyan, commissioned by the Tekeyan Cultural Association, and recognized masterworks by Komitas, Khachaturian, Mirzoyan, Hovhannes, and Schubert



Danielle Segen
Mezzo-soprano



Artistic Director
Prof. Movses Pogossian

Ji Eun Hwang
Violin 1

Aiko Richter
Violin 2

Morgan O'Shaughnessey
Viola

Jason Pegis
Cello



DETROIT • Wed. March 27 8:00 pm
cosponsored with Music Guild of
St. John Armenian Church
Recreation Center
22001 Northwestern Hwy
Southfield, MI 48075
Free admission, Reception to follow

MONTREAL • Fri. March 29 8:30 pm
Tekeyan Center
825 Manoogian St.
Saint-Laurent, Canada
For tickets call 514 747-6680
Reception to follow

BOSTON • Sun. March 31 1:00 pm
cosponsored with Holy Trinity
Armenian Church
145 Brattle St.
Cambridge, MA 02138
Free admission

GLENDAL • April 27 7:30 pm
Tekeyan Cultural Association
Los Angeles Chapter
Cosponsored with Abril
Bookstore, 415 E. Broadway
Glendale. For tickets: 818 243-4112
or itsmyseat.com/abrilbooks

PASADENA • May 19 6:00 pm
Tekeyan Cultural Association
Pasadena-Glendale Chapter
TCA Beshgeturian Center
1901 N. Allen Avenue
Altadena, Calif.

For more information, email tcadirector@aol.com